Kurdistan: A Banned Identity

Hawrê Qandil

Kurdistan: A Banned Identity

© 2025 Hawrê Qandil

First published in Pushpar 2725 (July 2025, Gregorian calendar)

By Media Publishing, New York

Originally written in Kurdish and subsequently translated into English by the author.

The right to print, share, and distribute this book is openly granted to all patriotic individuals, freedom fighters, and committed contributors to the cause of national liberation and self-determination for Kurdistan.

To make the truth known about the Kurdish nation, its language, and its rightful homeland, I extend my deepest gratitude to you—the patriot, the conscientious citizen, the humanist, and the advocate of freedom—for circulating this book in any accessible form, whether as a digital file, printed edition, or audio recording, wherever and however you are able. I especially thank you, the honorable and principled reader, for helping this message reach the hands of Kurds, Turks, Azeris, Persians, Arabs, Baloch, Assyrians, Syriacs, Chaldeans, and all other peoples of the region and the world—so that they may benefit from its message of truth, justice, and reconciliation. I kindly ask that this book not be used for personal financial gain. Rather, let its publication

and dissemination be undertaken freely, voluntarily, and in good conscience—as a moral, humanitarian, and national duty. May your efforts serve the Kurdish people, support peace and justice in the region, preserve the identity of Kurdistan, and advance the cause of a free and sovereign Kurdish homeland.

With deep gratitude and utmost respect for your commitment—

Hawrê Qandil

The Value of History, Identity, and Language

A person who does not know their past cannot truly understand their present—nor can they shape a meaningful future. One who lacks pride in their history cannot take genuine pride in their present or future. Those who do not respect their own historical journey cannot earn respect for their current or future endeavors. Without reflection on the past, one cannot clearly see the present or the path ahead. A person who disregards their nation's history cannot attain true dignity or self-worth in the present or future. And one who does not truly know themselves can never truly and rightly understand others.

For this reason, knowledge of one's national history and identity is not merely informative—it is the vital key to awakening the individual within society.

Likewise, someone who does not know their own language cannot fully master any other. Recognizing, preserving, and honoring one's mother tongue is not only a cultural necessity—it is a profound ethical responsibility.

Those who fail to learn from their nation's past will struggle to succeed in the present and stumble in the future, lacking both clarity and pride in their knowledge.

Therefore, to avoid repeating the mistakes of our predecessors, we must study and learn from our history—so that the wisdom of the past may illuminate our present and guide us toward a dignified future.

Hawrê Qandil

Preface

After years of studying a broad range of historical sources on the origins of the Kurds, Turks, Persians, and Arabs — including their languages and early civilizations — I was left deeply unsettled. The narratives I encountered felt incomplete, distorted, and in many cases, deliberately manipulated. What disturbed me most was not only the omission of Kurdish history but a conscious and systematic effort to erase it. Truths were suppressed, falsehoods elevated, and critical facts either misrepresented or entirely deleted.

Many of these texts — even those authored by Kurds — were written under the ideological and linguistic frameworks of the occupying powers that have ruled Kurdistan for centuries. Some were produced under pressure; others, with cautious restraint. Only a handful dared to tell the truth about the history, language, and identity of the Kurdish people — a nation of more than 80 million. The more I read, the clearer it became that the burden of reclaiming this censored and silenced history now rests with those of us who continue to seek the truth.

Much of the region's historiography has been shaped by authors loyal to occupying regimes — whether through allegiance, fear, or ideological conformity. These narratives often served political agendas rather than historical accuracy. Some writers knowingly acted as agents of oppression; others, perhaps unwittingly, became mouthpieces of anti-Kurdish frameworks. Even Kurdish authors, constrained by censorship or lacking access to comprehensive knowledge, have at times echoed these dominant narratives.

International scholars, too, have contributed to the problem. After collaborating with regime-affiliated historians, many introduced Kurdish history to the world through distorted lenses. Whether through negligence or intent, their work helped advance a broader campaign to marginalize the Kurdish people from historical records.

Religious and ideological constructs compounded the damage. Kurds were reduced to tribal anecdotes, framed as a peripheral people beneath dominant Arab-Muslim or Aryan-Persian imperial legacies. The very notion of a Kurdish nation was denied —

dismissed as a recent invention — without explanation of when, how, or by whom such a vast identity could have been "fabricated."

Perhaps the most egregious injustice has been committed by Turkic groups — including Turkmen, Azeris, and Turks — who arrived from Central Asia in the 11th century AD and seized vast portions of Kurdish territory. These groups imposed their languages, erased Kurdish toponyms, and established modern nation-states such as Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan atop Kurdish lands. Similarly, Arab tribes like the Quraysh and Abbasids expanded from the Arabian Peninsula into Kurdish regions, founding Arab-ruled states such as Syria and Iraq. Persian-speaking Tajiks, originating from Central Asia, settled in ancient Median lands, assimilated Kurdish populations, and built modern-day Iran through the marginalization and oppression of Kurds.

Despite this long arc of erasure, there have been noble efforts — by Kurdish and non-Kurdish patriots alike — to preserve Kurdish history with honesty and courage. Yet even these works have often fallen short of capturing the full breadth and depth of the Kurdish experience. I came to realize that I had a moral obligation to contribute to this historical reclamation.

This book is my attempt to reconstruct a clear and truthful account of Kurdish history, grounded in the Kurdish language and free from the influence of occupying ideologies. It is intended as a resource for future generations — a foundation on which Kurds can rediscover their identity with pride, understanding, and clarity. My hope is that readers, especially young Kurds, will reconnect with their roots and embrace the uniqueness of the Kurdish nation — long buried beneath centuries of denial and distortion.

The existing literature on Kurdish historiography and linguistics often fails to reflect the lived reality of a vibrant yet marginalized people. This inadequacy led me to revisit Kurdish sources and present them in a modern, accessible, and chronologically structured format. It is designed to aid educators, researchers, and everyday readers within Kurdistan and across the world.

Throughout this work, I have consciously avoided inserting personal bias. Where I have added brief commentary, it is only to clarify, not to influence. I want readers to engage with the material freely — guided by conscience, logic, and their own search for truth.

While history can sometimes feel dense or difficult, I have endeavored to present the material in a clear and structured manner. To help readers navigate dynasties, state formations, and historical timelines, I have included summary tables and charts. I have consulted dozens of sources, reviewed them carefully, and distilled what I believe are the most accurate and essential truths.

This book is not a conventional academic thesis filled with citations and footnotes. It is a people's book — a sourcebook for truth-seeking, not academic prestige. I wanted it to be reflective, readable, and useful for a wide audience. If this work inspires others — especially those more capable than I — to continue the process of uncovering Kurdistan's silenced history, then my effort will not have been in vain.

I hope these pages rekindle pride in Kurdish identity and contribute to the broader struggle for recognition, justice, and self-determination. May the truths within shine like stars through the darkness of three thousand years of oppression — lighting the path for future generations toward freedom and dignity.

There was a time I tirelessly searched for a book like this. When I realized it did not exist, I chose not to wait. I accepted the weight of this national and moral responsibility. What you now hold is the result of that choice — a labor born of study, commitment, and belief in the power of truth.

Whatever its imperfections, this is my humble offering. If there are flaws, I ask for the understanding of the Kurdish people and of all who stand for truth and justice. This is my contribution to the Kurdish cause.

General Note

It must be stated without hesitation: **no people in the Middle East have suffered a more systematic erasure of their identity, distortion of their history, and exploitation of their homeland than the Kurds.** Across centuries, the Kurdish nation has endured these injustices not by misfortune, but as a direct consequence of their Kurdishness.

In modern states such as **Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria**, large portions of the population — those who today identify as **Turks, Azeris, Turkmen, Persians, or Arabs** — are in fact **ethnic Kurds** who have been forcibly or gradually assimilated. This assimilation extends far beyond mere language or cultural changes. In many cases, it has tragically led to people who actively reject their Kurdish roots — individuals who deny their heritage and contribute to the erasure of Kurdish memory.

History teaches a painful lesson: **more Kurds have been killed by assimilated Kurds — those who abandoned their identity and served occupying regimes — than by foreign invaders.** These individuals, having become fully Turkified, Arabized, or Persianized, played devastating roles in the suppression of their own people, further accelerating the cultural obliteration of Kurdistan.

Today, **over 80% of the populations in these states are Kurdish by origin.** Yet this undeniable fact has been buried beneath imposed identities such as "Iranian," "Turkish," or "Arab." Even the very word **"Kurd"** has not escaped distortion. In Turkish, it was altered to **"Kurt"**, meaning *wolf* or *short*. In Persian, it was associated with **"Krd"**, meaning *did* or *action*. In Arabic, Kurds were long referred to as **Al-Akrad (الْأَكْرَاد)** instead of **Al-Rāʿī (الرَّاعِي, "the shepherd")**—a term historically imposed by Arabs as a means of belittlement and humiliation.

As you read this book, you will see countless examples of Kurdish **towns, mountains, rivers, and cities** that have been systematically renamed in Turkish, Persian, or Arabic. This is not random. It is part of a long-term, intentional campaign not just to erase Kurdish culture — but to erase Kurdish memory from the landscape of the Middle East.

Table of Contents

Number	Section	Page
	Introduction	1
	Section One	5
1	**The History of the Medes and Their Region in the Pre-Christian Era**	5
1.1	The Civilization and Rule of the Kura-Araxes (3400–2000 BC)	6
1.2	The Civilization and Rule of the Lullubi (3000–2000 BC)	8
1.3	The Civilization and Rule of the Awan Dynasty in Elam (2700–2100 BC)	14
1.4	The Sumerian Civilization and Its Rule (2700–2004 BC)	18
1.5	The Kingdom of Hamazi (Khamazi) (c. 2530–2010 BC)	25
1.6	The Kingdom of Subartu (c. 2334–2240 BC)	27
1.7	The Hurrian Civilization and Its Authority (2300–1200 BC)	29
1.8	The Gutian Civilization and Rule (c. 2150–2100 BC)	33
1.9	The Rule of the Shimashki Dynasty of Elam (circa 2100–1900 BC)	36
1.10	The Reign of the Sukkalmah Dynasty of Elam (c. 1900–1600 BC)	39
1.11	The Babylonian Rule (1894–539 BC)	41
1.12	The Kingdom of Arzawa (c. 1700–300 BC)	54
1.13	The Hittite Authority (c. 1680–1178 BC)	57
1.14	The Kassite Civilization (c. 1595–1155 BC)	61
1.15	The Rule of Mitanni (c. 1500–1200 BC)	63
1.16	The Reign of the Luwians (ca. 1430–700 BC)	66
1.17	The Rule of the Igihalkid Dynasty in Elam (c. 1400–1200 BC)	70
1.18	Rule of the Shutrukid Dynasty in Elam: 1200–1100 BC	76
1.19	The Migration of Persian-Aryan Tribes into Media (c. 1000–500 BC)	77
1.20	The Rule of the Kadusii (c. 1000–300 BC)	78
1.21	The Kayanian Monarchy (c. 900–500 BC)	80
1.22	The Kingdom of Urartu (c. 860–585 BC)	82

1.23	The Rule of the Manneans (850–616 BC)	84
1.24	The Rule of the Neo-Elamite Dynasty (c. 760–688 BC)	89
1.25	Kawa the Blacksmith and the Emergence of Kurdish National Identity (c. 700 BC)	90
1.26	The Median Monarchical Empire (678–550 BC)	93
1.27	The Humbanid Dynasty in Elam (688–645 BC)	97
1.28	The Neo-Elamite Dynasties (645–520 BC)	97
1.29	The Achaemenid Persian Empire (550–330 BC)	101
1.30	The Rule of Atropatene Kurdistan (323 BC – 224 AD)	105
1.31	The Parthian (Arsacid) Kurdish Empire (247 BC – 224 AD)	109
1.32	The Monarchy of Commagene (163 BC – 17 AD)	112
1.33	The Kingdom of Adiabene (145 BC – 116 AD)	116
1.34	The Rule of the Kingdom of Osroene (132 BC – 244 AD)	120
1.35	The Kurdish Rule of Corduene (90 BC – 69 AD)	121

	Section Two	124
2	**The History of the Kurdish People and Their Region in the Common Era**	124
2.1	The Kurdish Sasanian Imperial Dynasty (244–651 AD)	125
2.2	The Arrival of the Arab Nation in Kurdistan (610–632 AD)	132
2.3	The Umayyad Arab Caliphate (661–750 AD)	136
2.4	The Abbasid Arab Caliphate Empire (750–1258 AD)	139
2.5	The Authority of the Samanid Dynasty of Persia (819–999 AD)	148
2.6	The Rule of the Kurdish Hadhaban Dynasty (906–1144 AD)	149
2.7	The Rule of the Kurdish Buyid Dynasty (934–1048 AD)	151
2.8	The Kurdish Shaddadid Dynasty (950–1258 AD)	155
2.9	The Kurdish Rawadi Dynasty (950–1071 AD)	158
2.10	The Kurdish Hasan Wahidi Dynasty (959–1015 AD)	161
2.11	The Arrival of the Turkic Nation in Kurdistan (977–1186 AD)	163
2.12	The Kurdish Marwanid Dynasty (983–1085 AD)	166

2.13	The Kurdish Annazid Dynasty (990–1117 AD)	168
2.14	The Seljuk Turks' Invasion of Kurdistan (1030 AD)	169
2.15	The Rule of the Kurdish Shwankara Dynasty (1050–1180 AD)	171
2.16	The Rule of the Scholarly Kurdish Dynasty of Danishmend Qazi (1072–1100 AD)	173
2.17	The Kurdish Fathalawi Dynasty (1155–1432 AD)	175
2.18	The Khurshadi Kurdish Dynasty's Rule in Southwestern Kurdistan (1184–1598 AD)	176
2.19	The Rule of the Ayyubid Dynasty (1171–1250 AD)	180
2.20	The Rule of the Khwarazmian Turkish Dynasty (1193–1220 AD)	183
2.21	The Mongol Turkish Invasion of Kurdistan (1218–1220 AD)	184

	Section Three	187
3	**The History of the Kurdish People and Their Region from the 12th to the 19th Century AD — The Past 800 Years**	187
3.1	The Emirate of Colemêrg (Hakkari) in Northern Kurdistan (1133–1847 AD)	188
3.2	The Emirate of Bitlis in Northern Kurdistan (1187–1847 AD)	189
3.3	The Principality of Chamishkizak (Çemişgezek) in Northern Kurdistan (1220–1663 AD)	190
3.4	The Emirate of Haskif in Northern Kurdistan (1232–1525 AD)	191
3.5	The Emirate of Botan in Northern Kurdistan (1271–1847 AD)	194
3.6	The Jalairid Turkic Dynasty (1336–1410 AD)	195
3.7	The Rule of the Qara Qoyunlu ("Black Sheep" Turkmen Confederation) (1374–1468 AD)	196
3.8	The Rule of the Aq Qoyunlu ("White Sheep" Turkmen Confederation) (1378–1501 AD)	198
3.9	The Autonomous Kurdish Emirates (12th–19th Century AD)	201
3.10	The Safavid Order and the Spread of Twelver Shiism (1252–1334 AD)	203
3.11	The Reign of Shah Ismail I Safavid (1501–1524 AD)	205

3.12	The Battle of Chaldiran (1514 AD)	207
3.13	The Mokriyan Principality (1500–1610 AD)	208
3.14	The Turkic Demographic Transformation of Kurdistan (Early 1500s)	209
3.15	The Reign of Shah Tahmasp I (1524–1576 AD)	211
3.16	The Reign of Shah Ismail II (1576–1577 AD)	212
3.17	The Reign of Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh (1578–1587 AD)	212
3.18	The Reign of Shah Abbas I (1588–1629 AD)	213
3.19	The Safavid Invasion of the Mir Khanate of Lepzerin (1610 AD)	214
3.20	The Turkification and Persianization of Kurdish Lands by Shah Abbas I (1620 AD)	216
3.21	Safavid Intrigue and the Blame Placed on the Kurds	217
3.22	Safavid Turkic Invasion of the Mokri Principality	218
3.23	The Reign of Shah Safi I (1629–1642 AD)	219
3.24	The Treaty of Zuhab (Qasr-e Shirin), 1639 AD	219
3.25	The Reign of Shah Abbas II (1642–1666 AD)	219
3.26	The Reign of Shah Suleiman (1666–1694 AD)	220
3.27	The Reign of Shah Sultan Hossein (1694–1722 AD)	220
3.28	Attempts to Revive the Safavid Empire (1729–1749 AD)	220
3.29	The Soran Principality (1570–1837 AD)	220
3.30	The Ardalan Principality (1590–1868 AD)	221
3.31	The Kurossi Principality in Luristan (1590–1715 AD)	222
3.32	The Baban Principality (1670–1850 AD)	224
3.33	The Safavid Turks' Attack on the Emir of Bilbas (1693 AD)	227
3.34	The Afghan Invasion and the Fall of the Safavid Empire (1709–1722 AD)	227
3.35	The Afsharid Turkic Dynasty in Iran and Eastern Kurdistan (1736–1796 AD)	228
3.36	The Kurdish Zand Dynasty in Eastern Kurdistan (1751–1794 AD)	230
3.37	The End of Afshar Turkic Rule and the Rise of the Qajar Turks (1797 AD)	232
3.38	The Bedir Khan Revolt (1821–1847 AD)	233

3.39	The Governorship of Kurdistan (Sne Province) in 1867 AD	236
3.40	The Assassination of Jaf‘ar Agha Shikak in 1867 AD	236
3.41	The Rule of the Bilbas Principality (1713–1873 AD)	237
3.42	Rule of the Azerbaijani Turkic Qajar Dynasty in Iran and Kurdistan (1789–1925 AD)	240
3.43	Turkic Qajar Oppression in Eastern Kurdistan	241
3.44	Revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nahri (1879 AD)	244
3.45	The Assassination of Hamza Agha Mangur (1880)	246

Section Four		247
4	**Modern History of the Kurdish People (20th Century–Present)**	247
4.1	The Enlightenment-Nationalist Uprising of Abdulrazzaq Bedirkhan (1912)	247
4.2	The Armenian Genocide (1915)	248
4.3	The Uprising of Sheikh Mahmoud Tamrxani (1919–1924)	249
4.4	Establishment of the Turkish Ottoman Empire (1299 AD)	250
4.5	World War I (1914 AD)	255
4.6	The Simko Shikak Rebellion (1918–1930 AD)	257
4.7	The Treaty of Sèvres (1919–1920)	261
4.8	The Erzurum Congress (1919)	263
4.9	Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji’s Revolt (1919–1930)	264
4.10	The National Pact (Misak-ı Millî), 1920	268
4.11	The Dersim Uprising (1937–1938)	270
4.12	The Treaty of Lausanne (1923)	273
4.13	The Red Kurdistan Autonomy (1923–1929)	274
4.14	The Sheikh Said Piran Uprising (1925)	278
4.15	The Rise to Power of the Turkic-Azeri Pahlavi Dynasty in Iran (1925–1979)	284
4.16	The Qadamkheir Rebellion (1925–1928)	286
4.17	The Rebellion of Ihsan Nuri Pasha (1926–1930)	289

4.18	The Dersim Uprising of Seyid Riza (1937)	295
4.19	The Second World War (1939–1945)	301
4.20	The Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad (1946)	303
4.21	The Rebellion of General Mustafa Barzani (1961)	308
4.22	The Algiers Agreement (1975)	312
4.23	The Uprising of Ahmad Tawfiq (Abdullah Ishaqi), 1950	313
4.24	The Uprising in Northern Kurdistan under the Leadership of Abdullah Öcalan (Apo), 1970s	318
4.25	The 1991 Uprising in Southern Kurdistan	327
4.26	The Kurdish Uprising in Red Kurdistan (1992)	332
4.27	The Uprising of the People of Rojava (Western Kurdistan), 2011–2025	334
4.28	The Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs of Kurdistan	337

	Section Five	341
5	**The Kurdish Language**	341
5.1	The Origins of the Kurdish Language	342
5.2	Evaluation of the Avestan Language and Its Use in Its Historical Era	345
5.3	Linguistic Assessment of the Peoples of the Zagros, Mesopotamia, and Surrounding Regions	351
5.4	Historical Phases of the Kurdish Language	356
5.5	The Tat Dialect of Kurdish	359
5.6	The Origins of the Goran Kurds	363

	Section Six	366
6	**Fabricating, Rebranding, and Erasing Kurdish Heritage**	366
6.1	Ashqani Daryas (Daryas Lovers)	367
6.2	The Salt Men of Chêrawa	370
6.3	The Zewa Treasure	371
6.4	Bastam Fortress	373
6.5	Ayanis Fortress	375
6.6	Shanidar Cave	378
6.7	The Royal Mummy of Sna	380
6.8	Burial of the Noblewoman of Yagheh Tepe	390
6.9	Haskif	391
6.10	The Kalmakareh Cave Treasure	393
6.11	Taq-e Bostan	399
6.12	The Sanctuary of the Eyes of Afrin	402
6.13	Girê Navrast	407
6.14	The Sacred Source of Kanîya Zalal	410
6.15	Nibor (Nippur, Nifr)	412
6.16	The Processional Way of Babylon	414
6.17	The Lion Reliefs of Nineveh	416
6.18	The Eye Idols	418
6.19	The Palace of Nimrud	420
6.20	The Lamassu of Khorsawa	422
6.21	The Statues of Gozan	424
6.22	The Urartian Bronzes	427
6.23	The Ivory and Gold Artifacts of Zewa	429
6.24	The Golden Bowl of Darias	433
6.25	The Ishtar Gate and the Processional Way	435
6.26	The Tablets of Nibor	438
6.27	The Slaying of the Zagros Lion	440
6.28	The Cuneiform Tablet of Nineveh and the Epic of Gilgamesh	444

6.29	The Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil	447
6.30	Erasure and Appropriation of Kurdish Heritage: A Historical and Political Continuum	449
6.31	Erased Names and Stolen Heritage: Cultural and Historical Reattribution of Kurdish Identity	451
	Conclusion	456
	Appendixes	462
	Refereces	507

Introduction

For more than a century, the Kurdish people have struggled against systematic erasure—cultural, linguistic, geographic, and historical. In the modern Middle East, where national narratives have been shaped by empire-building, ideological control, and state-sponsored revisionism, the story of Kurdistan has often been reduced to fragments scattered across external accounts, biased historiographies, and politically driven interpretations. In this environment, Kurdish identity has not simply been overlooked; it has been deliberately obscured, rewritten, and reattributed to others.

This book emerges from a critical need to restore clarity to a history long withheld from its rightful owners. *Kurdistan: A Banned Identity* is not an attempt to create a new narrative, nor to offer mythologized retellings. Instead, it seeks to recover what already exists—what has always existed—but has been buried beneath layers of political agendas, cultural suppression, and academic negligence. By returning to authentic Kurdish sources, re-examining ancient civilizations of the region, and tracing linguistic, cultural, and political continuities across millennia, this work endeavors to correct long-standing distortions and provide readers with a coherent, chronological, and truthful account of who the Kurds are.

Although the Kurdish nation today is divided among several modern states—Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—their historical roots extend far beyond these imposed borders. The peoples who inhabited the Zagros Mountains, the highlands of the Upper Tigris, the plains of the Euphrates, and the fertile valleys of Media formed deeply interconnected cultural zones stretching back to the earliest phases of human civilization. Civilizations such as the Hurrians, Subarians, Lullubi, Gutians, and Medes contributed to a cultural continuity that shaped the ethnogenesis of the Kurdish nation. Despite this, political powers throughout history—ancient, medieval, and modern—have repeatedly rebranded these civilizations as “Persian,” “Turkish,” “Semitic,” or “Indo-Iranian,” erasing Kurdish foundations and ownership.

This Introduction serves as a guide to the structure, purpose, and methodology of the book. It offers readers a clear understanding of how the chapters are arranged, how

sources were analyzed, and why certain historical interpretations have been challenged or rejected. Above all, it frames the broader question that this book aims to answer: **How did a nation of more than 80 million people come to be excluded from the historical narratives of the very region they helped build?**

The purpose of this work is threefold:

First, it seeks to reassemble Kurdish history from the earliest recorded civilizations to the present day. By examining more than 5,000 years of cultural, linguistic, and political development, the book presents a continuous historical narrative that counters the fragmented image commonly found in mainstream scholarship.

Second, it challenges misleading narratives produced by colonial administrators, occupying regimes, and ideologically aligned historians. Many such works—both Western and regional—have relied heavily on biased or incomplete sources, often guided by the political priorities of the states they served. As a result, Kurdish heritage has frequently been appropriated, renamed, or reframed to reinforce non-Kurdish national identities.

Third, the book aims to make Kurdish history accessible to readers from all backgrounds: Kurdish youth seeking to understand their roots, international scholars confronting gaps in Middle Eastern historiography, and general readers interested in the origins of one of the world's oldest yet most marginalized nations. This text avoids unnecessary complexity while preserving accuracy and depth, combining academic rigor with readability.

Methodology and Sources

The book relies primarily on a chronological analysis of historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence—specifically focusing on civilizations native to the Zagros and Upper Mesopotamian regions. Unlike many conventional studies, this work does not accept externally imposed identity frameworks at face value. Civilizations commonly portrayed as "Iranian," "Persian," "Semitic," or "Anatolian" are re-examined through a

regional-linguistic perspective that respects the ancient cultural zones of Media, Subartu, Lullubia, and Hurrian lands.

The sources used include:

- Ancient inscriptions, tablets, and royal annals
- Archaeological site reports from across Kurdistan, the Caucasus, and Mesopotamia
- Kurdish-language manuscripts and oral traditions
- Comparative linguistic studies
- Modern academic publications—evaluated critically rather than uncritically

The goal is not to dismiss established scholarship, but to correct biases where they exist, highlight overlooked evidence, and restore Kurdish continuity where it has been denied.

Structure of the Book

This work is divided into six major sections, each addressing a distinct historical period or theme:

Section One — Explores pre-Christian civilizations of the Zagros and Upper Mesopotamia, including the Kura-Araxes culture, Lullubi, Elamites, Hurrians, and Medes. These chapters establish the ancient foundations of Kurdish identity.

Section Two — Examines Kurdish history from the Common Era through the rise of early Kurdish principalities, interactions with Arab, Persian, and Turkic powers, and the struggles for regional autonomy.

Section Three — Covers the last 800 years of Kurdish emirates and principalities, illustrating a complex landscape of Kurdish-led political structures, cultural achievements, and resistance.

Section Four — Focuses on the 20th and 21st centuries—uprisings, nationhood movements, modern political struggles, genocide, displacement, and the ongoing fight for recognition and freedom.

Section Five — Presents a linguistic analysis of the Kurdish language, its roots, phases, and dialects, as well as the relationship between Kurdish and other ancient languages of the region.

Section Six — Details the systematic rebranding, appropriation, and erasure of Kurdish heritage: monuments, cities, artifacts, and cultural achievements wrongfully attributed to later powers.

Together, these sections illustrate a continuous, unbroken history that modern borders and political narratives have attempted—but failed—to erase.

Why This Work Matters

History shapes identity, and identity shapes destiny. For the Kurdish people—scattered, suppressed, and often forcibly assimilated—the reclamation of their past is essential to reclaiming their future. This book is written at a time when truth is both powerful and dangerous; when nation-states continue to impose narratives that deny the deep roots of the Kurdish nation; and when young Kurds across the world seek clarity, pride, and connection to their heritage. By illuminating the truth, this book stands as a corrective to centuries of silence. It is not a political manifesto, though it speaks to political realities. It is not an academic thesis, though it follows disciplined research. It is, above all, a statement of existence—a reaffirmation that the Kurdish nation has deep historical foundations that no amount of erasure can undo.

For readers within Kurdistan and abroad, this Introduction invites you on a journey through time: from the earliest fires lit in the mountains of the Zagros to the modern struggle for recognition, dignity, and homeland. The story of Kurdistan is not a marginal footnote to regional history—it is one of its central pillars.

This book hopes to restore that truth.

Section One

1 – The History of the Medes and Their Region in the Pre-Christian Era

The **Medes** are recognized as one of the earliest peoples to establish a unified political entity across the territory historically known as **Media**. Between the **9th and 6th centuries BC**, they founded and governed the **Median Empire**, laying the groundwork for structured statehood in the region. For nearly **three centuries**, the Medes ruled over their homeland, significantly shaping the political, cultural, and ethnic landscape of the ancient Near East.

According to numerous ancient historical sources, the **Kurdish people** are widely believed to be the direct descendants of the Medes. Over time, it is thought that the name "**Mede**" evolved—both **linguistically** and **culturally**—into the term "**Kurd**," preserving a vital ancestral link between the ancient and modern inhabitants of the region.

To fully understand the emergence of the Medes and their cultural foundations, it is essential to examine the **earlier civilizations and peoples** that inhabited Media and the surrounding territories **prior to the rise of the Median monarchy**. These include:

- The **Kura-Araxes culture**
- The **Lullubi**
- The **Elamites**
- The **Sumerians**
- The **Hurrians**
- The **Gutians**
- The **Hittites**
- The **Luvians**
- The **Urartians**
- The **Akkadians**
- The **Babylonians**
- The **Assyrians**

- The **Adiabenians**
- The **Parthians**
- The **Persians**
- The **Manichaeans**
- The **Achaemenids**
- The **Atropatenians**

Each of these ancient peoples contributed uniquely to the region's **cultural, linguistic, religious, and political development**. Studying their histories is essential for anyone seeking a comprehensive understanding of the **formation of the Median Empire**, and by extension, the **early roots of Kurdish identity**.

1.1 – The Civilization and Rule of the Kura-Araxes (3400–2000 BC)

The **Kura-Araxes civilization**—also known as the **Early Trans-Caucasian culture**—emerged around **3400 BC** in the **Ararat Plain**, a region that today spans parts of **Armenia** and **northern Kurdistan**. This ancient culture thrived for over a millennium, enduring until approximately **2000 BC**. Rather than operating as a centralized state or dynastic monarchy, the Kura-Araxes represented a **cultural and economic confederation**, comprising **tribal settlements** and **clan-based leadership structures**.

There is no surviving evidence of a royal lineage or unified authority. Instead, the society functioned through **local governance**, led by **tribal chieftains** who maintained regional autonomy. The civilization extended across a wide geographical area—including the **South Caucasus**, **eastern Anatolia**, and large parts of **northern and eastern Kurdistan**—forming one of the most **extensive early cultural networks** in the ancient Near East.

The Kura-Araxes people are particularly known for:

- Their **distinctive red-and-black burnished pottery**, often considered a cultural hallmark.

- **Advanced metalworking techniques**, including copper and bronze tools.
- **Fortified settlements** built strategically on elevated terrain.
- **Extensive trade routes** that connected them with neighboring civilizations, such as the Sumerians, Hurrians, and Elamites.

Although **no written records** have survived to identify individual rulers, the long-lasting influence of this civilization laid the foundation for the **emergence of the Hurrian state** and other regional powers. By around **2200 BC**, the Kura-Araxes culture began to decline—likely due to **climatic shifts**, **increased regional competition**, and **absorption into more centralized states** emerging across Mesopotamia and the Zagros region.

Despite its eventual decline as a distinct cultural entity, the **legacy of the Kura-Araxes civilization** endured through its technological innovations and its **lasting cultural imprint** on successor societies. Many modern scholars believe that the **Kura-Araxes people played a foundational role in the ethnogenesis of the Kurdish nation**, contributing both linguistically and culturally to the ancestry of the Kurdish people.

Language and Religion

The Kura-Araxes people are believed to have spoken the **Hori (Khori) language**—considered by linguists and historians to be a **proto-Kurdish tongue**. Their religious beliefs were rooted in **Khori spiritual traditions**, particularly the **worship of the sun**, which continued to influence the region's religious identity for centuries.

Political and Cultural Center

The civilization's main urban center—regarded as its **capital**—was located near the **Aras River**, in the area historically referred to as **Red Kurdistan**. This city served as a thriving hub of commerce, culture, and political coordination. However, over time, it was destroyed, and its remnants have yet to be fully recovered or excavated by modern archaeology.

Map of the Kura-Araxes

1.2 – The Civilization and Rule of the Lullubi (3000–2000 BC)

The **Lullubi** (also spelled **Lulubi**) were an ancient highland people who inhabited the **Zagros Mountains** from approximately **3000 to 2000 BC**. They established a monarchy rooted in the **Lullubi royal lineage**, governing a strategic region that encompassed **Sharazor**, **Kirmashan**, **Luristan**, and the rugged highlands of the **Zagros range**. Despite their geographic advantage, the Lullubi frequently faced military incursions from neighboring powers—most notably the **Akkadians** and **Sumerians**, who sought to dominate their lands and control the critical mountain passes. *(See Appendix 1.)*

One of the most celebrated Lullubi rulers was **King Anubanini**, who reigned around **2300 BC**. He is best known for commissioning the **rock relief at Sar-e Pol-e Zahab** in present-day **Kermanshah**—a striking monument that portrays his military victories and symbolizes the assertion of Lullubi sovereignty. Anubanini's reign coincided with the expansionist campaigns of **Naram-Sin of Akkad** (2254–2218 BC), grandson of **Sargon**

the Great. Though the chronology of their encounters remains debated, both leaders operated within the same geopolitical era, often in confrontation over Lullubi territory.

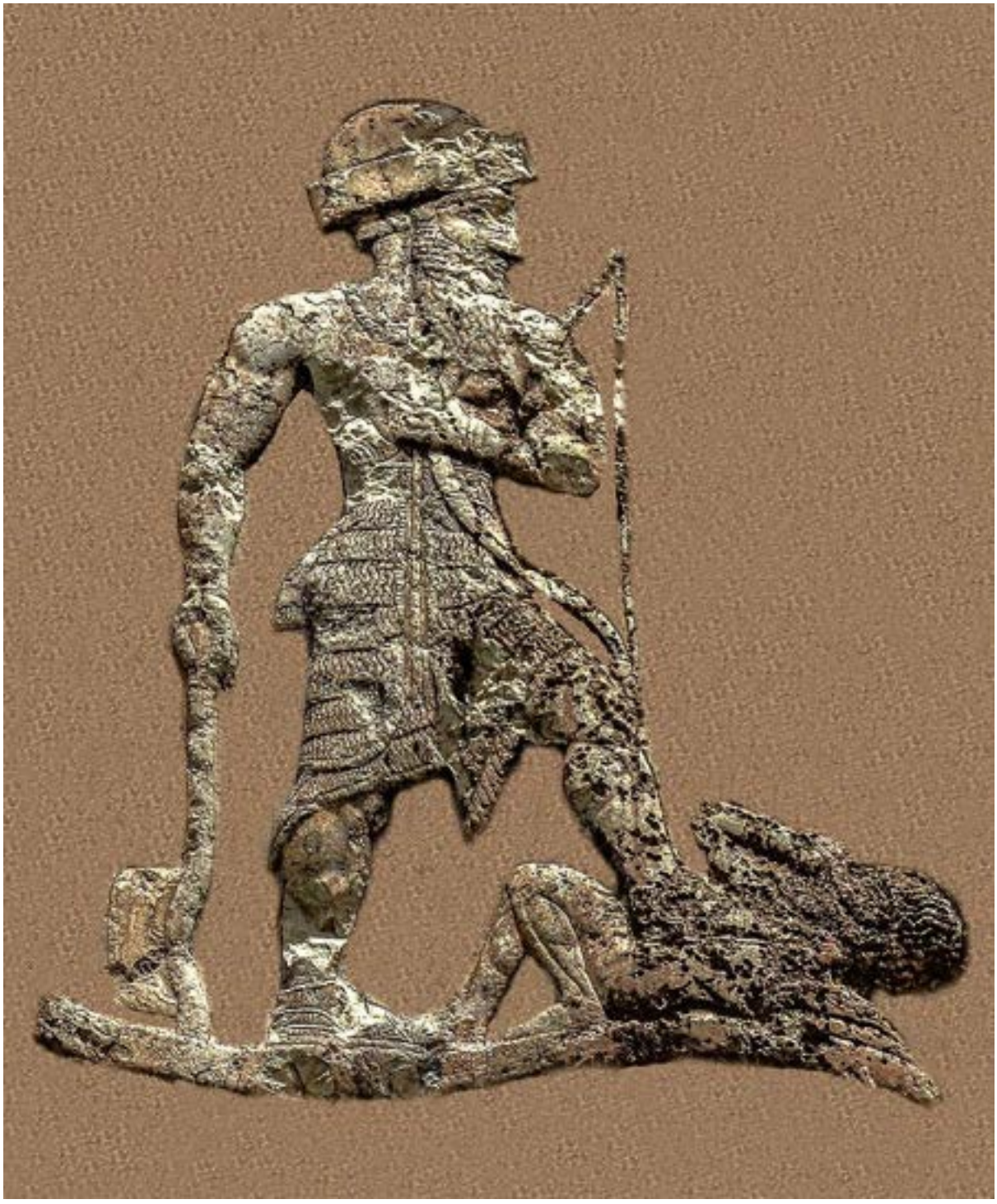
Following Anubanini, another prominent figure—**King Satuni**—rose to power around **2250 BC**. Historical sources attribute to Satuni a significant victory over Naram-Sin, a rare feat that momentarily stalled **Akkadian expansion** and reinforced Lullubi resistance. His leadership marked a turning point in the defense of Lullubi autonomy.

By around **2100 BC**, **King Irtum** emerged as a key ruler during a turbulent era marked by pressure from both the **Akkadians** and **Egyptians**. Despite the intensity of these campaigns, Irtum successfully preserved the kingdom's independence. His strategic acumen and diplomatic resilience helped maintain Lullubi control during a time of regional upheaval.

Toward the end of the millennium, around **2000 BC**, **King Tarduni** ascended the throne and designated **Kirkuk** and **Sharazor** as dual capitals of the Lullubi kingdom. Under his reign, these cities flourished as **political and cultural hubs**, reinforcing Lullubi influence across the highlands.

Throughout their history, the Lullubi were frequently drawn into **military conflict** with dominant Mesopotamian empires, including **Akkad**, the **Third Dynasty of Ur**, and later, **Assyria**. These confrontations were fueled by both territorial ambition and the strategic importance of the **Zagros mountain passes**, which served as vital routes for trade, communication, and warfare.

Despite ruling for nearly a millennium and demonstrating extraordinary resilience, the Lullubi eventually **succumbed to the overwhelming military might** of their larger neighbors. Between **2000 and 1500 BC**, facing repeated invasions, they retreated deeper into the **mountainous interior** of Kurdistan. This **strategic withdrawal**, though marking the end of their political dominance, enabled the Lullubi to **preserve their cultural identity**, surviving as a distinct **highland community** long after their kingdom had faded from political maps.



King Anubanini of the Lullubi was a powerful and courageous warrior, renowned for subduing formidable adversaries. His legacy is immortalized in a rock relief carved between 2300 and 2000 BC, located at Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermashan, Eastern Kurdistan.

A military relief depicting the Lullubi army and their kings, dated to approximately 2500 BC, has been discovered at Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermashan, Eastern Kurdistan.

A relief depicting Lullubi prisoners captured by the Assyrians was discovered at Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermashan, Eastern Kurdistan.

A carved figure etched into the rock at Sarpol-e Zahab in Kirmashan—despite thousands of years of erosion and vandalism—is still preserved today and protected by the Kurds as part of their heritage.

The foundations of a Lullubi structure at Sarpol-e Zahab in Kermashan, Eastern Kurdistan, are estimated to date back to approximately 2300 BC.

The victory of the Akkadian (Assyrian) emperor over the Lullubi king, dating to around 2250 BC, is depicted in a carved relief. This inscribed stone is currently housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

1.3 – The Civilization and Rule of the Awan Dynasty in Elam (2700–2100 BC)

The **Elamites** were among the earliest civilizations recorded in human history, establishing a powerful kingdom that endured for over two millennia. At the height of its influence, the **Elamite state** encompassed extensive territories, including modern-day **Khuzestan**, **Luristan**, **Bandar-e Mahshahr** (ancient **Mangshar**), **Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari**, **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** (Kewegle), **Anshan** (modern **Shiraz**), and **Bushehr** (historical **Reyshahr**), extending as far as the **shores of the Median Gulf** (now known as the Persian Gulf).

Emerging around **2700 BC**, the Elamite kingdom evolved through a series of dynasties, beginning with the **Awan Dynasty**, which laid the foundation for Elam's early development. Elam retained its independence for centuries until it was finally conquered by **Cyrus the Great** of the **Achaemenid Empire** in **539 BC**. Throughout its reign, the **Elamite language** served as the official state language. Many linguists regard it as a significant precursor to certain dialects of the modern **Kurdish language**, highlighting Elam's lasting cultural legacy in the region.

The **capital city of Elam** was **Susa** (modern-day **Shush**), one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Other notable Elamite centers included **Anshan**, **Dur-Untash** (the archaeological site of **Chogha Zanbil**, south of Dezful), and **Madaktu**—a historically important city whose exact location remains uncertain but is believed to have been situated south of Susa.

Several distinguished kings emerged from the **Awan Dynasty** and subsequent Elamite royal houses, leaving behind a legacy of both cultural brilliance and military achievement:

- **Peli** (c. 2700 BC): Regarded as the **founder of the Awan Dynasty**, King Peli established the Elamite state and laid the foundation for its administrative and political structure. His reign marked the beginning of Elam's prominence as a regional power.

- **Puzur-Inshushinak** (also known as **Kutik-Inshushinak**, c. 2100 BC): One of the most powerful and influential rulers of Elam, he presided over a period of prosperity, expanding Elam's territorial influence and promoting Elamite culture and architecture. His reign marked a golden age for the early Elamite kingdom.
- **Shutruk-Nakhunte** (r. c. 12th century BC): Perhaps the **most celebrated Elamite monarch**, known for his **military conquests against Babylon**. He famously looted important Mesopotamian relics, including the **Victory Stele of Naram-Sin** and the **Code of Hammurabi**, bringing them to Elam as symbols of victory. Despite his triumphs, his dynasty weakened due to internal unrest and local resistance.
- **Tepti-Humban-Inshushinak** (r. mid-8th century BC): The **last recorded king** of the **Shutrukid Dynasty**, his reign ended with the **Assyrian conquest** of Elam. This marked the final chapter of Elamite independence, as the once-powerful kingdom was gradually absorbed into the expanding **Assyrian Empire**. The political power of Elam never recovered thereafter, fading into historical memory.

The Elamite civilization, with its advanced state structure, written language, monumental architecture, and enduring cultural contributions, played a pivotal role in shaping the early history of the **Iranian plateau** and **Greater Kurdistan**.

This is a list of the notable kings and rulers of the Awan Dynasty in Elam, including the years of their reign, their capital cities, and the major events during their respective periods.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period	Capital	Major Events
Peli	c. 2700 BC	Awan (near the Kārūn estuary, Khuzestan)	First known king of the Awan Dynasty; named the capital after his dynasty.
Hishi-Prašini	c. 2450 BC	Susa (Shush)	Continued the Elamite royal lineage.
Luhhi-ishan	c. 2300 BC	Susa (Shush)	Son of Hishi-Prašini; defeated by Sargon of Akkad.
Immahsini	c. 2270 BC	Susa (Shush)	Defeated by Rimush of Akkad.
Puzur-Inshushinak (Kutuk-Inshushinak)	c. 2100 BC	Susa (Shush)	Maintained independence from Akkad; promoted Elamite language and culture. His death led to the rise of Ur III over Elam and marked the end of the Awan Dynasty.

Map of the Elamite Kingdom's Rule

1.4 – The Sumerian Civilization and Its Rule (2700–2004 BC)

The roots of Sumerian civilization extend as far back as 4500 BC; however, records of their organized monarchy begin around 2700 BC. The heart of their authority was located in **southern Mesopotamia**, corresponding to modern-day **southern Iraq**. The Sumerians inhabited and ruled over some of the earliest and most influential cities in human history, including **Uruk, Ur, Eridu, Lagash,** and **Nibor**.

The Sumerians are widely recognized as one of the earliest known civilizations in the world. They pioneered the development of **urban governance**, **written communication**, **religious institutions**, and **agricultural infrastructure**—setting the foundation for future societies across the region.

Their most notable achievements include:

- **The invention of cuneiform script** — the world's earliest known system of writing, used for administration, literature, and legal records.
- **The construction of monumental religious structures**, especially **ziggurats**, which served as temples and centers of city life.
- **The development of advanced systems of mathematics, astronomy, and law**, including legal codes and bureaucratic institutions.
- **The innovation of two- and four-wheeled carts** made of wood and metal, used for transportation, agriculture, and warfare—with the assistance of horses and donkeys.
- **The introduction of calendar systems and timekeeping practices**, laying the groundwork for future scientific observation.

Importantly, the **Sumerian language** was the official language of state affairs. Written in **cuneiform script**, it was used extensively in administration, literature, religion, and education. Thousands of Sumerian tablets have been preserved and are now housed in museums across the world, offering invaluable insight into one of humanity's first complex societies.

Sumerian Claym Clinder- A digital image of the Sumerian stepped temple structure, or the ziggurat of the city of Ur.

The structure above, dating back to 2112–2095 BC in the city of Ur—located near present-day Nasiriyah in Iraq—was built by a Sumerian king named Ur-Nammu. Over time, the Sumerian kingdom fell under the control of the Akkadians and Babylonians.

Below is a list of the known kings of the Sumerian dynasty, along with the years of their reign, their capital cities, and significant events from their periods of rule.

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period**	**Capital**	**Religion / Deities**	**Key Events**
Gilgamesh	2700–2500 BC	Uruk (Warka, now an archaeological site between Nasiriyah and Diwaniyah in Iraq)	Polytheism; Anu, Enlil, Inanna	The first king of Uruk, known globally as Gilgamesh.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period	Capital	Religion / Deities	Key Events
Urukagina	2350 BC	Lagash (Tell al-Hiba near Nasiriyah, Iraq)	Polytheism; Ningirsu (God of Lagash)	Initiated reforms in Lagash, known as the "Code" of Lagash.
Lugalzagesi	2340–2270 BC	Umma (between Diwaniyah and Basra, Iraq)	Polytheism; Enlil and Ninlil	Last ruler of Sumer before the rise of the Akkadian Empire.
Sargon of Akkad	2334–2279 BC	Akkad (site between Baghdad and Tikrit, Iraq)	Polytheism; Anu, Enlil, Ishtar	Founder of the Akkadian Empire; conquered much of Sumer.
Ur-Nammu	2112–2095 BC	Ur (near Nasiriyah, Iraq)	Polytheism; Nanna (moon God), Enlil	Founded the Third Dynasty of Ur; created the Codified Laws of Ur-Nammu.
Shulgi	2095–2047 BC	Ur (near Nasiriyah, Iraq)	Nanna (moon God)	Son of Ur-Nammu; expanded the empire significantly.
Ibbi-Sin	2028–2004 BC	Ur (near Nasiriyah, Iraq)	Nanna (moon God)	Last king of the Third Dynasty of Ur; defeated by the Elamites.
Shamshi-Adad I	1813–1781 BC	Shubat-Enlil (Tell Leilan near Qamishli, Rojava)	Polytheism; God of Assur	Ruler of Assur and northern Mesopotamia; integrated Sumer into a broader empire.

The Land of Sumer

The earliest known written record of human civilization was composed by the Sumerians.

The names of the regions and cities of that era.

A wall decoration from the civilization of the Sumerian authority.

The Standard of Ur, dating back to approximately 2600–2400 BC, was discovered in the Royal Cemetery of Ur.

1.5 – The Kingdom of Hamazi (Khamazi) (c. 2530–2010 BC)

The **Kingdom of Hamazi**, also spelled **Khamazi**, was an ancient monarchy or city-state that emerged around **2530 BC**, during the early dynastic period of Mesopotamia. It was located between present-day **Halabja in Southern Kurdistan** and **Ecbatana (Hamadan) in Eastern Kurdistan**, in the region between the **Upper Zab** and **Diyala Rivers**—a strategic area linking the Iranian plateau with Mesopotamia.

The **Sumerian King List** records a single ruler for Hamazi: **Hadanish**, who is credited with a reign lasting 360 years—likely a symbolic number reflecting dynastic longevity rather than literal time. After defeating the **King of Kish**, a major Sumerian city-state near present-day **Tell al-Uhaymir (Iraq)**, Hadanish briefly assumed control over all of Sumer. However, his reign—and the independence of Hamazi—was ended by **Enshakushanna**, king of **Uruk**, who reasserted Sumerian dominance.

Another important historical figure linked to Hamazi is **Ziziya**, who appears in the **diplomatic archives of Irkab-Damu**, king of **Ebla** (in modern-day Syria). These tablets document diplomatic and trade relations between Ebla and Hamazi, including formal exchanges of goods and mutual requests—indicating Hamazi's active role in the broader political and economic landscape of the time.

By the period of the **Third Dynasty of Ur (circa 2046–2037 BC)**, Hamazi had been incorporated as a province under the expanding **Neo-Sumerian Empire**. During the reign of **King Amar-Sin**, regional governance of Hamazi was administered by rulers such as **Lunanamu**, son of **Nemhani**, and **Ur-Ishkur**—both of whom are referenced in contemporary administrative records. After its absorption into the Ur III state, the kingdom's independent stature gradually diminished. Around **2010 BC**, following the collapse of the Third Dynasty of Ur, Hamazi was invaded and plundered by the forces of **Isin**, further accelerating its decline. The inhabitants of Hamazi spoke the **Hori (Khori) language**, and their **capital city, Kani-Jouzi**, was situated near modern-day **Halabja**. The people of Hamazi practiced **solar worship**, a belief system that possibly influenced later regional religious traditions.

A surviving tablet documenting the rule of Hamazi, written in cuneiform script, describes this city-state and its monarchy. It is currently housed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, United Kingdom.

1.6 – The Kingdom of Subartu (c. 2334–2240 BC)

Subartu—also known in ancient sources as **Subar**, **Shubur**, or **Subartushi**—was a significant cultural and geopolitical region in **northern Mesopotamia** during the mid-third millennium BC. Its influence extended across the **mountainous northern, southern, and eastern zones of present-day Kurdistan**, making it a key player in the power dynamics of ancient Mesopotamia.

From the perspective of the **Akkadian Empire**, Subartu represented the **northern frontier**, just as **Sumer**, **Martu**, and **Elam** represented the southern, western, and eastern zones of Mesopotamia, respectively.

Unlike centralized monarchies such as Sumer or Akkad, **Subartu was not a unified state**. Instead, it consisted of a **confederation of city-states, tribal communities, and regional alliances**, which formed shifting relationships—both cooperative and adversarial—with neighboring empires. Historical interactions with Subartu include:

- **En-temena of Lagash**, a prominent Sumerian ruler, claimed military victory over Subartu, asserting its temporary subjugation.
- **Sargon of Akkad (r. 2334–2279 BC)** launched campaigns against Subartu and incorporated it into the Akkadian realm.
- **Naram-Sin (r. 2254–2218 BC)**, Sargon's grandson, also listed Subartu among the regions under his dominion.
- **Ishbi-Erra of Isin** and **Hammurabi of Babylon** later documented military actions against Subartu in their records.

In the early **13th century BC**, following the defeat of **Shattuara of Mitanni** by **Adad-nirari I**, Subartu came under **Assyrian control** and functioned as a vassal state for a time.

While Subartu lacked a clearly defined capital, archaeological and textual evidence suggests its territory stretched from the **Upper Tigris Valley** into the **highlands of northern Kurdistan**, particularly west of **Lake Van**, bordering **ancient Armenia** and **Hurrian territories**.

Subartu is mentioned in written records as early as the **mid-third millennium BC**, and references continued up to the **8th century BC**. The **primary language** of its inhabitants was **Hurrian**, and the term **"Subarian"** was occasionally used to describe their tongue and cultural affiliation.

Religion and Belief System

Subartu's spiritual life was deeply rooted in the **Mesopotamian religious tradition**. Their pantheon closely mirrored those of neighboring civilizations, with deities such as **Shamash** (god of the sun) and **Marduk** (god of wisdom and order) being prominently revered. Religious practices emphasized **spiritual purification**, temple rituals, and the worship of a diverse range of deities.

Over time, Subartu's **lack of centralized governance** led to fragmentation and gradual decline. The region was eventually absorbed by larger imperial powers, including the **Assyrians** and, later, the **Urartians**. By the **9th century BC**, Subartu had become part of the **Urartian Kingdom**, although some local Subarian communities are recorded to have **resisted Urartian rule**.

Legacy and Kurdish Ancestry

Modern historians and scholars have drawn connections between the **ancient Subarians** and the **ancestral tribes of contemporary Kurds**, particularly in the regions of **Badinan**, **Hakkari**, and **Wirme (Urmia)**. Place names such as **Zêbar** and **Hakkar** are believed to carry etymological traces of the ancient name **Subar**, suggesting deep-rooted cultural and linguistic continuity between the Subarians and the modern Kurdish population.

Map of the Subartu Kingdom during its Period of Dominance

1.7 – The Hurrian Civilization and Its Authority (2300–1200 BC)

The **Hurrians**—also known as **Khurrians** or **Horites**—were an ancient people who inhabited the regions between the **Tigris and Euphrates Rivers**, flourishing from approximately **2300 to 1200 BC**. They played a foundational role in the history and culture of ancient **Kurdistan** and the wider Near East.

The **Hurrian civilization** reached its peak between **1500 and 1300 BC**, establishing kingdoms and confederations that engaged in major political and military confrontations with surrounding empires. Notably, the Hurrians fought against the powerful **Egyptians** during this period and achieved **significant military victories**, demonstrating their regional influence.

They also clashed with the **Assyrians**, successfully defending their territory in several instances. However, **internal divisions and dynastic conflicts** eventually weakened their unity, leading to the gradual decline of Hurrian authority and the eventual absorption of their lands into rising empires such as **Assyria** and **Urartu**.

One of the most prominent remnants of Hurrian civilization is the **city wall of Amed** (modern-day **Diyarbakir** in Northern Kurdistan). These massive fortifications, among the oldest and most significant in the region, stand as a testament to the architectural and defensive capabilities of the Hurrian people and are often cited as evidence of early Kurdish urban development.

Among the known rulers of the Hurrian world were **Tuppi-Khi** and **Tish-Atal**, both remembered for their leadership during the height of Hurrian political and military power.

The Structure of the Hurrian (Khurrite) Monarchical Authority

The Discovery of Urkesh, the Forgotten City of the Hurrians

Urkesh: An Ancient City of Hurrian Civilization

Urkesh is an ancient city belonging to the Hurrian civilization. It was discovered in 1980 AD near the village of Tell Mozan, situated between the cities of Qamishli and Hasakah

in Western Kurdistan (Rojava). This discovery was significant because it enabled archaeologists to identify Tell Mozan as the lost city of Urkesh.

Urkesh served as a major center of Hurrian civilization and was prominently mentioned in second millennium BC sources. Excavations at Tell Mozan have unearthed the oldest known evidence of Hurrian urbanism and political authority.

The city held great religious importance and functioned as a temple residence dedicated to the sun deity. It featured a large temple complex used as a religious center. Beneath it, a unique subterranean structure was built for rituals associated with the underworld. In other words, the dead were buried underground, where religious ceremonies and rites were conducted.

A recovered image from the tombs of the Hurrian monarchy during their period of decline. The name "Hurrian" (Khurrite) originates from their religion, which was centered on sun worship.

1.8 – The Gutian Civilization and Rule (c. 2150–2100 BC)

The **Gutians** were a tribal people who rose to prominence in the aftermath of the **collapse of the Akkadian Empire**, establishing their rule over large parts of **Mesopotamia** around **2150 to 2100 BC**. Referred to in historical records as the **"Gutians,"** they played a transitional role in Mesopotamian history during a period of political fragmentation and instability.

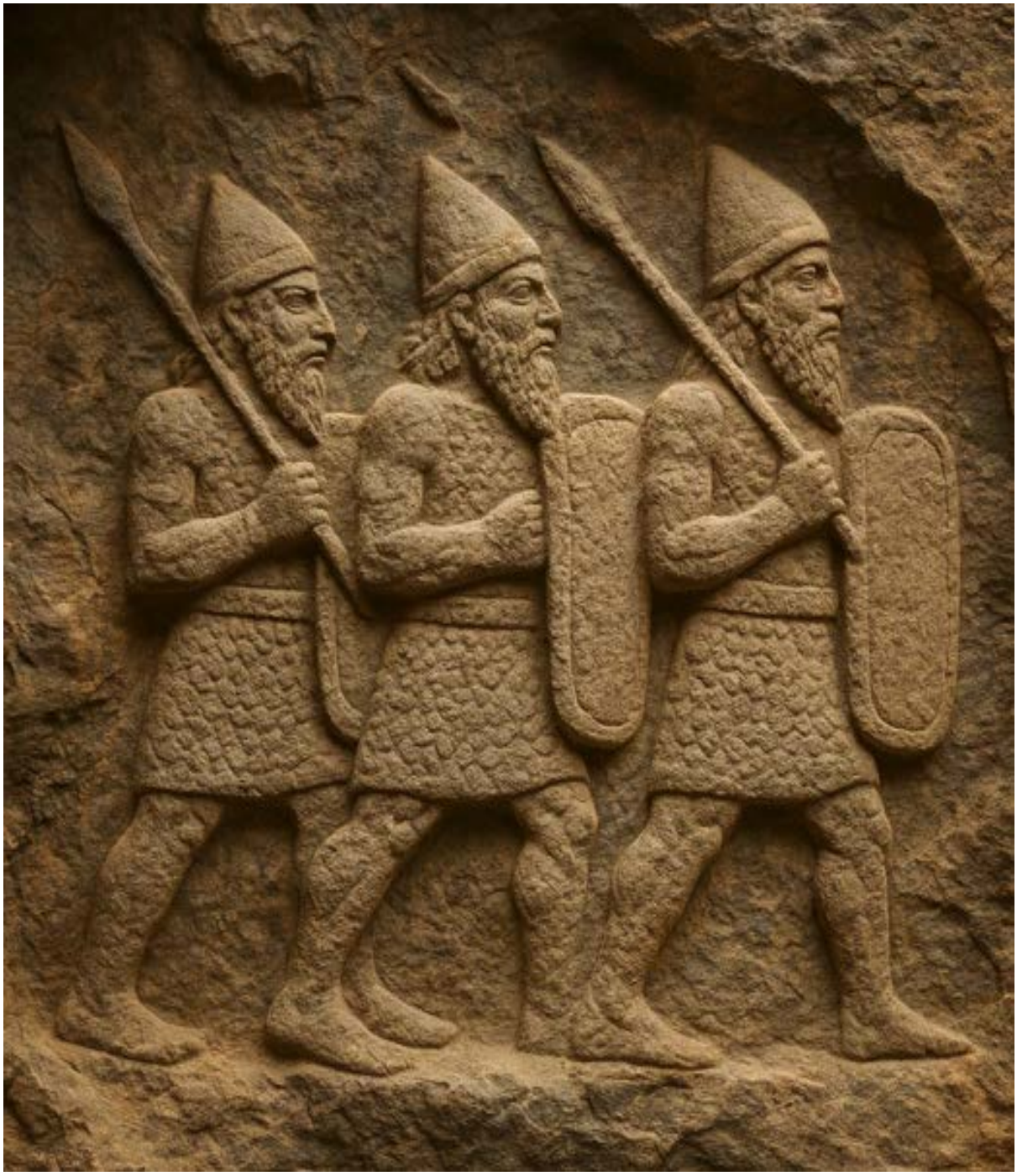
Following the fall of Akkadian control, the Gutians seized the opportunity to assert their authority. They formed a **dynasty of kings** who governed much of **southern Mesopotamia**, though their reign is often characterized as **disjointed and decentralized**. Despite some early administrative achievements, the Gutians struggled to maintain order and faced constant resistance from local Sumerian populations.

The known rulers of the Gutian dynasty include:

- **Sarlagab** (c. 2150 BC): One of the earliest recorded Gutian kings, marking the beginning of Gutian rule in Mesopotamia.
- **Shulme** (c. 2145 BC): Continued Gutian dominance and further established the tribe's presence in key Mesopotamian cities.
- **Elulmesh** (c. 2140 BC): Successfully captured several **Sumerian cities**, briefly expanding Gutian influence.
- **La-erabum** (c. 2135 BC): Faced increasing **rebellions and uprisings** from the inhabitants of Sumerian city-states, reflecting declining Gutian control.
- **Tirigan** (c. 2130 BC): The last known Gutian king. His defeat by **Utu-hegal of Uruk** marked the end of Gutian sovereignty and the restoration of native Sumerian rule.

The city of **Uruk** (modern-day **Warka**), located approximately **30 kilometers from Samarra** in present-day Iraq, played a pivotal role in the Gutian downfall. It was from here that **Utu-hegal** launched his campaign to liberate Sumer from Gutian control, effectively closing this brief but impactful chapter of Mesopotamian history.

A Geographical Map of the Ancient Near East, Including Place Names Related to the Gutian Period.



A digital reconstruction of a Guti warrior's image, recovered from the caves of the Zagros Mountains.

A digital reconstruction of urban planning, architecture, and city design from the Gutian era of the Kurds. This structure was located in the city of Arapha (modern-day Kirkuk), which was the largest city under Gutian rule and served as the capital of their civilization.

1.9 – The Rule of the Shimashki Dynasty of Elam (circa 2100–1900 BC)

The **Shimashki dynasty** was a prominent line of **Elamite rulers** that emerged around the end of the **Awan dynasty**, during the early second millennium BC. This period marked a significant chapter in Elamite history, characterized by repeated conflicts with Mesopotamian powers—particularly with the **Third Dynasty of Ur** in Sumer.

Under Shimashki rule, the **administrative and spoken language** was a southern dialect of Kurdish, historically referred to as **Elamite**. This language bears notable similarities to **modern Luri and Laki**, suggesting deep linguistic continuity in the region.

The following is a list of the known kings of the Shimashki dynasty, including their reigns, associated capitals, and major events that occurred during their rule:

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Capital(s)	Significant Events
Girnamme I	2100 BC	Shimashki (east of Susa)	First known king of the Shimashki dynasty.
Ibarti I	2095 BC	Shimashki	Continuation of dynastic rule.
Girnamme II	2090 BC	Shimashki	Contemporary of Shulgi III of Ur.
Tazitta I	2070 BC	Shimashki, later Susa (Shush)	Moved the capital to Susa. Contemporary of Amar-Sin III of Ur.
Tazitta II	2050–2040 BC	Susa (Shush)	Son of Tazitta I, continued the same rule. Contemporary of Shusin III of Ur.
Kindattu	2040–2020 BC	Susa (Shush)	Became prominent after defeating Ibbi-Sin III and capturing the city of Ur.
Imazu	2020–2000 BC	Susa (Shush), Anshan (Shiraz)	Son of Kindattu; declared Anshan as a secondary capital.
Lurak Luhhan	2000–1980 BC	Susa (Shush)	Son of Imazu; successfully continued Elamite royal authority.
Shilhak-Inshushinak	1980–1975 BC	Susa (Shush)	Famous for military victories over neighboring powers, especially the Sumerians. His rule

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Capital(s)	Significant Events
			marks the legacy of Shimashki's Elamite dynasty.
Kudur-Lagamar	1975–1970 BC	Susa (Shush)	Mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 14). Involved in regional conflict.
Indattu-Inshushinak I	1965–1950 BC	Susa (Shush)	Maintained extensive regional authority.
Tan-Ruhuratir II	1950–1935 BC	Susa (Shush)	Son of Indattu-Inshushinak I; continued successful Elamite rule.
Indattu-Inshushinak II	1935–1930 BC	Susa (Shush)	Son of Tan-Ruhuratir II; sustained Elamite sovereignty.
Siwe-Palar-Huppak	1930–1925 BC	Susa (Shush), Shimashki	The most powerful Shimashki king; led a coalition against Babylon and briefly ruled parts of Mesopotamia.
Idaddu II	1925–1920 BC	Susa (Shush)	Maintained diplomatic ties with Mesopotamia.
Tan-Ruhuratir	1920–1912 BC	Susa (Shush)	Prominent diplomat.
Kudur-Nahhunte	1912–1900 BC	Susa (Shush)	Elam held strong regional power under his reign; led several successful campaigns against Sumerian and Akkadian kings.

One of the most notable rulers of the Shimashki dynasty was **King Kindattu**, who reigned around **2040 BC**. He played a pivotal role in the downfall of the **Third Dynasty of Ur**, notably leading the defeat of **Ibbi-Sin**, the last Sumerian king of that dynasty, and overseeing the **capture of the city of Ur**—a major turning point in Mesopotamian history.

The **last prominent monarch** of the Shimashki line was **Siwe-Palar-Khuppak**, who achieved considerable regional influence. His authority was so widely acknowledged that he was granted the prestigious **Sumerian title "King of the Four Quarters,"** a designation typically reserved for rulers of global dominion in the Mesopotamian worldview.

Following his reign, however, the dynasty gradually declined in power. Control eventually passed to the **Sukkalma dynasty**, which established its rule from the city of **Susa**, marking the next phase of Elamite political history.

Map of the Elamite Political Dominion

1.10 – The Reign of the Sukkalmah Dynasty of Elam (c. 1900–1600 BC)

The **Sukkalmah dynasty**—also known as the **Sukkalmahs of Elam**—was a prominent Elamite ruling house that governed from the early to mid-second millennium BC. This dynasty marked a formative era in Elamite history, during which its rulers exercised substantial authority over internal governance, military affairs, and diplomatic

relations—particularly with major Mesopotamian civilizations such as **Akkad** and **Sumer**.

The **administrative language** of the Sukkalmah court remained **Elamite**, which is recognized as a southern branch of the ancient **Proto-Kurdic dialects**. The dynasty established its political center in **Susa** (present-day **Shush**), one of the most important urban and cultural centers of ancient Elam.

The following is a list of known monarchs from the Sukkalmah dynasty, including their reigns, capital, and key events that defined their rule:

Rulers' Names	**Reign Period**	**Key Events**
Puzur-Sukalma	1900–1890 BC	After the fall of the Shimashki dynasty, the Sukalma dynasty was established. With its rise, political power in Elam became consolidated.
Ibarti II	1890–1880 BC	Following internal discord, he managed to stabilize his authority and shared power with his son.
Shilhaha	1880–1860 BC	Son of Ibarti; he expanded the authority of the Sukalma dynasty.
Kuk-Nashur I	1860–1840 BC	Son of Shilhaha, who successfully consolidated his reign.
Palar-Ishan	1840–1820 BC	One of the prominent rulers of this dynasty.
Kuk-Sanit	1820–1800 BC	Eldest son of Palar-Ishan, who passed his reign with success.
Lankuku	1800–1780 BC	Second son of Palar-Ishan, also a successful ruler.
Kuk-Kirwash	1780–1760 BC	Brother of Palar-Ishan; due to his reputation, he carried the titles of Sukkal of Elam, Shimashki, and Susa.

Rulers' Names	Reign Period	Key Events
Tem-Sanit	1760–1740 BC	Son of Kuk-Kirwash, successfully continued his authority.
Kudur-Nahhunte	1740–1720 BC	Son of Kuk-Kirwash, who successfully reigned.
Atta-Kushu	1720–1700 BC	Son of Kudur-Nahhunte, who held the titles of Sukkal and ruler of Ipir and Susa.
Tetep-Mada	1700–1680 BC	Son of Kuk-Nashur I, known as the shepherd of the people of Susa.
Idadtu-Napir	1680–1660 BC	Successor of Tetep-Mada and the last known ruler of the Sukalma dynasty.

Among the most notable rulers of this dynasty was **Shilhaha**, a formidable military commander whose leadership enabled Elam to assert dominance over large parts of the region. Under his reign, Elamite forces achieved significant victories in multiple campaigns—particularly against rival powers such as **Sumer**—cementing Elam's status as a formidable kingdom.

Another key figure was **Kutir-Nahhunte**, whose reign in the **19th century BC** marked a critical resurgence of Sukkalmah influence. Under his command, **Elam emerged as a major regional power**, directly challenging the authority of the **Akkadian Empire**. His military successes and diplomatic strategy elevated Elam's regional standing and reinforced its independence in the face of Mesopotamian dominance.

1.11 – The Babylonian Rule (1894–539 BC)

The **Babylonian civilization** witnessed a long and complex history, shaped by multiple dynasties and ruling lineages. Its most prominent and culturally influential phase was

the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**, widely regarded as the golden era of Babylonian power and achievement. This period spanned from **626 to 539 BC** and was marked by the reign of renowned monarchs—most notably **Nebuchadnezzar II**, whose rule left a lasting impact on the region's architecture, religion, and politics.

However, Babylonian statehood traces its origins much earlier, beginning with the **Old Babylonian Dynasty** (1894–1595 BC). Among its most significant rulers was **Hammurabi**, famed for issuing one of the earliest known legal codes in human history. During this era, **Babylon** served as both the political capital and a major cultural center, while **Babylonian** was the official administrative language of the kingdom.

The following section provides a list of notable Babylonian rulers, including the periods of their reigns and the key historical developments that occurred under their leadership:

Ruler's Name	**Reign Period**	**Religion**	**Key Events**
Hammurabi	1792–1750 BC	Polytheism (Marduk as chief deity)	Died naturally. Enacted the significant "Code of Hammurabi." His reign is known for military success and centralization of the Babylonian Empire.
Nebuchadnezzar II	605–562 BC	Polytheism (Marduk as chief deity)	Famous for military campaigns, including the conquest of Jerusalem and destruction of the First Temple. Also credited with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Died naturally in Babylon.
Amel-Marduk	562–560 BC	Polytheism (Marduk as chief deity)	Assassinated by his sister's husband, Neriglissar. His death sparked a power struggle. Known as the first Babylonian king mentioned in the Bible, especially for releasing King Jehoiachin of Judah.

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Religion	Key Events
Neriglissar	560–556 BC	Polytheism (Marduk as chief deity)	Assumed power after assassinating Amel-Marduk. Focused more on military activity.
Labashi-Marduk	556 BC	Polytheism (Marduk as chief deity)	Reigned for a few months before being assassinated. His death marked the end of the direct line of Neo-Babylonian kings. Nabonidus then ascended to the throne.
Nabonidus	556–539 BC	Polytheism, shifted worship toward the moon God Sin	Weakened Babylonian authority by focusing on religious reform unpopular with the elites. After the Persian invasion, the empire fell in 539 BC. Nabonidus was captured and deposed by Cyrus the Great.
Belshazzar	553–539 BC	Polytheism, glorifying Marduk	Co-regent with Nabonidus. Killed during the Persian conquest of Babylon. His fall was allegedly foreshadowed in the Bible's "writing on the wall."

Etemenanki (𒂍𒀭𒊹𒀀)

Etemenanaki means *"the foundational house of heaven and earth*.

The image above is a **digital reconstruction of Etemenanki**, the legendary Babylonian **ziggurat** widely believed to have inspired the Biblical narrative of the **Tower of Babel**. This monumental structure was dedicated to **Marduk**, the supreme deity of Babylon, and stood at the heart of the ancient city.

The origins of Etemenanki are traditionally attributed to the reign of **King Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC)**, one of the most iconic rulers of the Old Babylonian dynasty. However, the ziggurat achieved its most majestic form during the reign of **Nebuchadnezzar II**

(605–562 BC), under whose rule Babylon reached the pinnacle of its architectural and cultural influence.

Rising approximately **91 meters (300 feet)** into the sky, Etemenanki was composed of **seven terraced levels**, constructed with a combination of **baked bricks** and **reinforced mudbrick**. Its structure not only reflected technical ingenuity but also symbolized the spiritual ascent toward the heavens.

The surrounding temple complex featured **lush gardens**, **date palms**, **water channels**, and elements of advanced urban planning—hallmarks of Babylon's role as a thriving hub of **commerce**, **religion**, and **imperial administration**. The site's **bustling markets** and **carefully organized civic layout** further illustrate Babylon's status as one of the great cities of the ancient world.

Etemenanki stood as a **symbol of both religious devotion and political power**—and became a subject of myth across multiple civilizations. Its memory endures most famously in the **Biblical tale of the Tower of Babel**, a story that reflects the awe and ambition associated with the city.

Today, the ruins of Etemenanki are recognized as a vital part of **Babylon's archaeological heritage**, and the broader site is officially listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

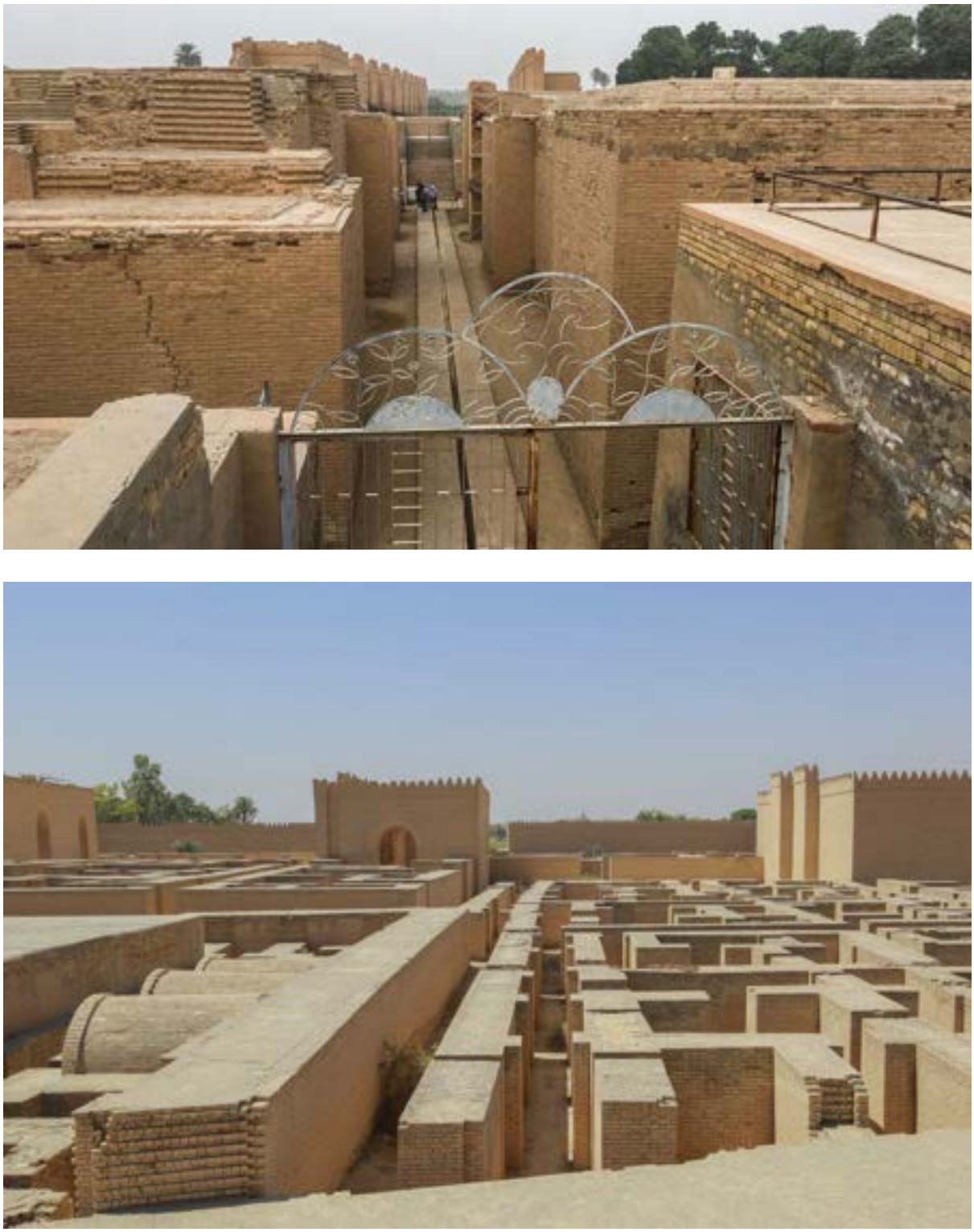
The image depicts the magnificent **Ishtar Gate**, once the **main ceremonial entrance** to the inner city of **Babylon**. Constructed around **575 BC** during the reign of **King Nebuchadnezzar II**, the gate stood as a monumental symbol of Babylonian grandeur and religious devotion.

The Ishtar Gate was famously decorated with **glazed blue bricks**, giving it a striking appearance that has captivated observers for centuries. Adorning its walls were intricate reliefs of **mythological creatures**, including **dragons (mušḫuššu)** and **bulls**, which represented divine guardianship and the power of the gods—particularly Marduk, the chief deity of Babylon.

Though originally located in Babylon, part of the gate was **excavated in the early 20th century** and **reconstructed in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin**, where it has remained since the early 1900s. The museum's reconstruction includes large portions of the original bricks and reliefs, offering one of the most iconic representations of ancient Mesopotamian architecture in the modern world.

However, **portions of the original foundation** and **lower structures of the Ishtar Gate** still exist at the archaeological site of **Babylon**, near the modern-day city of **Hillah in**

Iraq—a testament to the enduring legacy of one of the ancient world's most spectacular monuments.

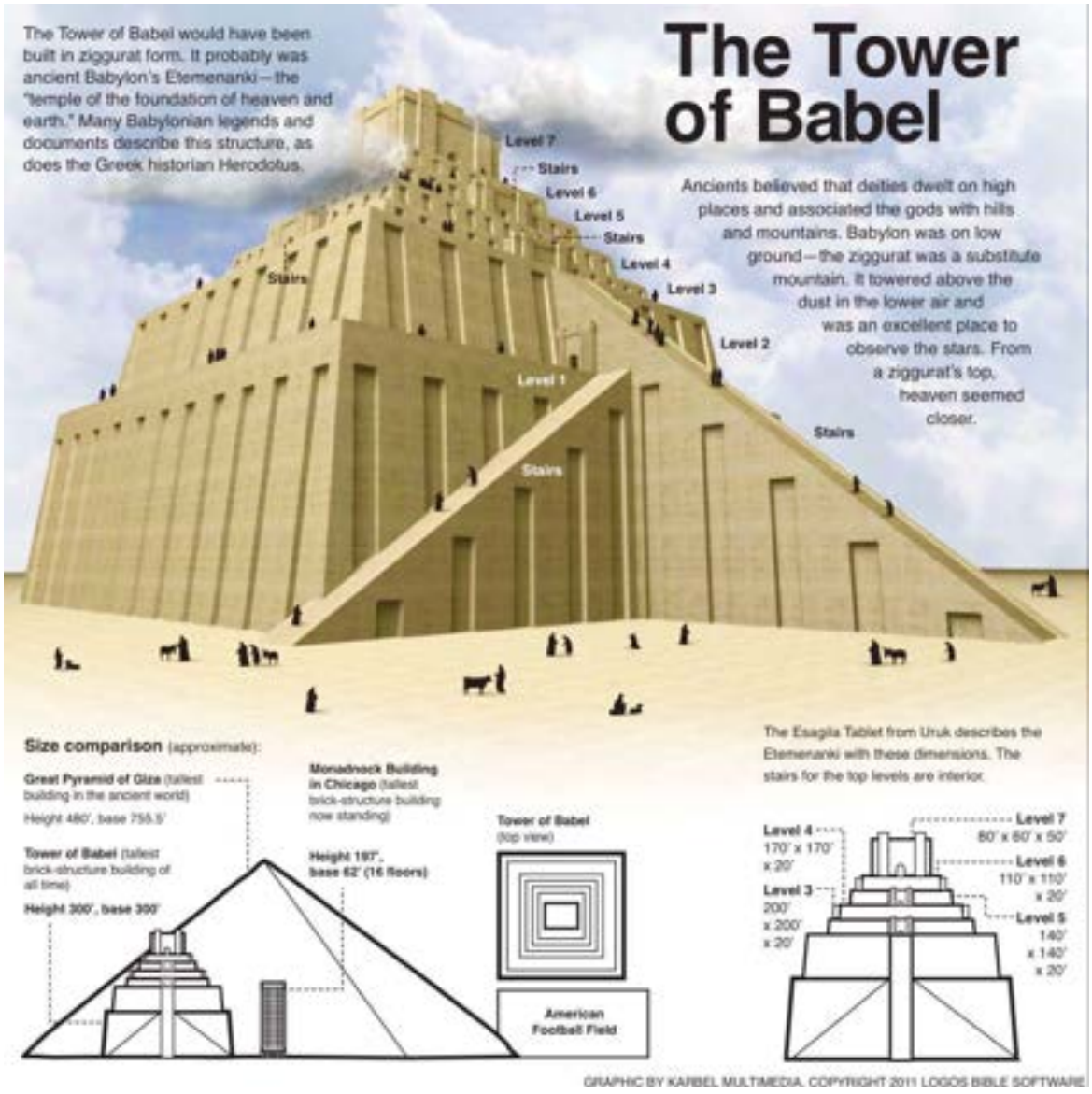


A royal structure in the city of Babylon

Tragically, this **ziggurat structure**, like much of **Kurdish history**, has been systematically **obscured, plundered, and neglected**. Despite its monumental significance, it was not granted **UNESCO World Heritage status until 2019**—a delay that speaks volumes about the political marginalization of the Kurdish people.

How stateless, how powerless, the Kurdish nation must be—once inhabiting a land that stood as a **cradle of civilization**, a center of imperial power and innovation. Today, that same land lies in ruins, and for over **two thousand years**, the Kurdish people have been denied sovereignty over their own heritage.

In a painful twist of history, the **Kurds are now so distant from the ancient city of Babylon**—both politically and physically—that they lack the **freedom, resources, and protection** to visit, preserve, or even claim stewardship over these cultural treasures. What was once a **foundation of world civilization** has been left vulnerable to decay, its custodians silenced, and its true history buried under layers of occupation and erasure.


The Tower of Babel
The Tower of Babel would have been built in ziggurat form. It probably was ancient Babylon's Etemenanki—the "temple of the foundation of heaven and earth." Many Babylonian legends and documents describe this structure, as does the Greek historian Herodotus.
Level 7
Stairs
Level 6
Level 5
Stairs
Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1
Stairs
Stairs
Stairs
Ancients believed that deities dwelt on high places and associated the gods with hills and mountains. Babylon was on low ground—the ziggurat was a substitute mountain. It towered above the dust in the lower air and was an excellent place to observe the stars. From a ziggurat's top, heaven seemed closer.
Size comparison (approximate):
Great Pyramid of Giza (tallest building in the ancient world)
Height 480', base 755.5'
Tower of Babel (tallest brick-structure building of all time)
Height 300', base 300'
Monadnock Building in Chicago (tallest brick-structure building now standing)
Height 197', base 62' (16 floors)
Tower of Babel (top view)
American Football Field
The Esagila Tablet from Uruk describes the Etemenanki with these dimensions. The stairs for the top levels are interior.
Level 4
170' x 170' x 20'
Level 3
200' x 200' x 20'
Level 7
80' x 80' x 50'
Level 6
110' x 110' x 20'
Level 5
140' x 140' x 20'
GRAPHIC BY KARBEL MULTIMEDIA. COPYRIGHT 2011 LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE

A digital image of the Ziggurat of Babylon.

Marduk (Mardokh): Son of the Sun, Power of Light

In ancient **Elamite**, **Babylonian**, and **Sumerian Kurdish** traditions, **Marduk (also known as Mardokh)** was revered as the **god of light and cosmic order**—a powerful

deity whose influence extended across mythology, religion, and politics. Among the beliefs surrounding Marduk was the legend of a **sacred tablet** associated with him. It was said that whoever possessed this tablet would gain dominion over the fates of thousands—able to bring death to **ten thousand people** and attain the **fortune of all worlds**. Wars spanning centuries were fought over this tablet, underscoring its perceived divine potency.

Marduk first emerged as a **local Sumerian deity**, but his worship shifted to **Babylon** as the city rose to power. During the reign of **King Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC)**, Marduk became the **chief deity of the Babylonian kingdom** and, ultimately, the entire **Near East**. Under the **Neo-Babylonian Empire**—especially during the reign of **Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BC)**—Marduk was elevated to the status of **king of the gods**.

His divine authority was articulated in the **Enuma Elish**, the Babylonian creation epic, which describes Marduk's defeat of the chaos-dragon **Tiamat** and the formation of the world from her dismembered body. In this narrative, Marduk becomes the ruler of both **heaven and earth**, associated with light, wind, vegetation, justice, and order. He was viewed not just as a religious figure, but as a cosmic force symbolizing balance and renewal.

Marduk's primary temple, **Esagila**, was located near the towering **ziggurat Etemenanki** in the city of Babylon—an architectural marvel believed to have inspired the **Biblical tale of the Tower of Babel**. Each year, the **Akitu Festival** was held in his honor to **renew divine order and royal legitimacy**. This ritual signified Marduk's central role not only in Babylonian religion but also in the philosophical and political systems of the ancient world.

The Akitu Festival and the Babylonian New Year

The **Babylonian New Year** began in the **month of Nisan** (late March to early April), coinciding with the **spring equinox**. This aligns with **Newroz**, the Kurdish New Year,

suggesting that **Kurds are the cultural inheritors of Sumerian and Babylonian traditions**.

The **Akitu Festival**, one of the most significant events in the Babylonian calendar, celebrated both the **rebirth of nature** and the **renewal of divine and political order**. It typically lasted **12 days** and was held in either **Adar or Nisan**, depending on the astronomical calendar. It also marked the start of the **agricultural year**, symbolizing rebirth and regeneration in harmony with the sun entering the **zodiac sign of Aries**.

Key Ceremonial Components of the Akitu Festival:

1. **The Rebirth of Marduk**
   Marduk was symbolically **reborn** during the Akitu Festival, commemorating his **triumph over chaos**, as narrated in the Enuma Elish. This mythic victory represented the creation of the cosmos and the cyclical struggle between **order and disorder**. On the festival's first day, the **king of Babylon** would publicly reaffirm his **devotion to Marduk**, symbolizing his legitimacy to rule under divine authority and securing the god's favor for the coming year.
2. **Processions, Rituals, and Public Celebrations**
   Processions of priests, nobles, and citizens moved through Babylon's ceremonial streets, **carrying statues of the gods and sacred artifacts**. The celebrations included **chants, dances, animal sacrifices**, and **ritual purification** of the city. The people offered prayers for protection, prosperity, and divine guidance, while also celebrating communally with **music, food, and joy**.
3. **The King's Humiliation and Restoration**
   One of the most powerful symbolic acts of the festival involved the **king being stripped of his regalia** and brought before the **high priest**, where he was made to **kneel and confess his unworthiness**. This act of ritual humility underscored the belief that **the king's power came from the gods—not from himself**. Once absolved and blessed, the king was restored to his throne, reaffirming the **divine approval of his reign**.

4. **Unity, Joy, and the Spirit of Renewal**
   Like modern New Year celebrations, Akitu was a time for **collective joy and renewal**. It served as a unifying event for all of Babylonian society—bridging religion, governance, and everyday life. It encouraged reflection, optimism, and a reaffirmation of **communal harmony and divine order**.

This deeply symbolic and spiritually rich festival reveals much about the **Babylonian worldview** and offers a glimpse into the **cultural and religious continuity** that still resonates today in Kurdish Newroz traditions and collective memory.

The heading of this tablet refers to the Babylonian New Year festival (Akitu).

1.12 – The Kingdom of Arzawa (c. 1700–300 BC)

The **Kingdom of Arzawa** was an influential political entity located in **western Anatolia**, flourishing during the **Late Bronze Age**. Arzawa coexisted and at times rivaled major regional powers such as the **Hittite Empire** and **Ancient Egypt**. Its strategic position made it a key player in the power dynamics of the ancient Near East.

Arzawa's territorial domain extended across what is now **western Turkey**, encompassing major regions such as **Mira**, **Hapalla**, and the **Seha River Land**, as well as **Wilusa**—a region believed by many scholars to be the historical counterpart to the city of **Troy**.

The people of Arzawa spoke a language from the **Hurrian linguistic family**, sharing roots with the languages of the **Hittites**, **Hurrians**, and the **Mitanni Empire**. Their society was deeply religious, adhering to a **polytheistic belief system** focused on natural forces and celestial bodies. Among their most venerated deities were:

- **Tarhunt**, the **Storm God**, symbolizing power and protection;
- **Arma**, the **Moon God**, associated with cycles, time, and wisdom;
- **Solar deities**, representing vitality, truth, and divine authority.

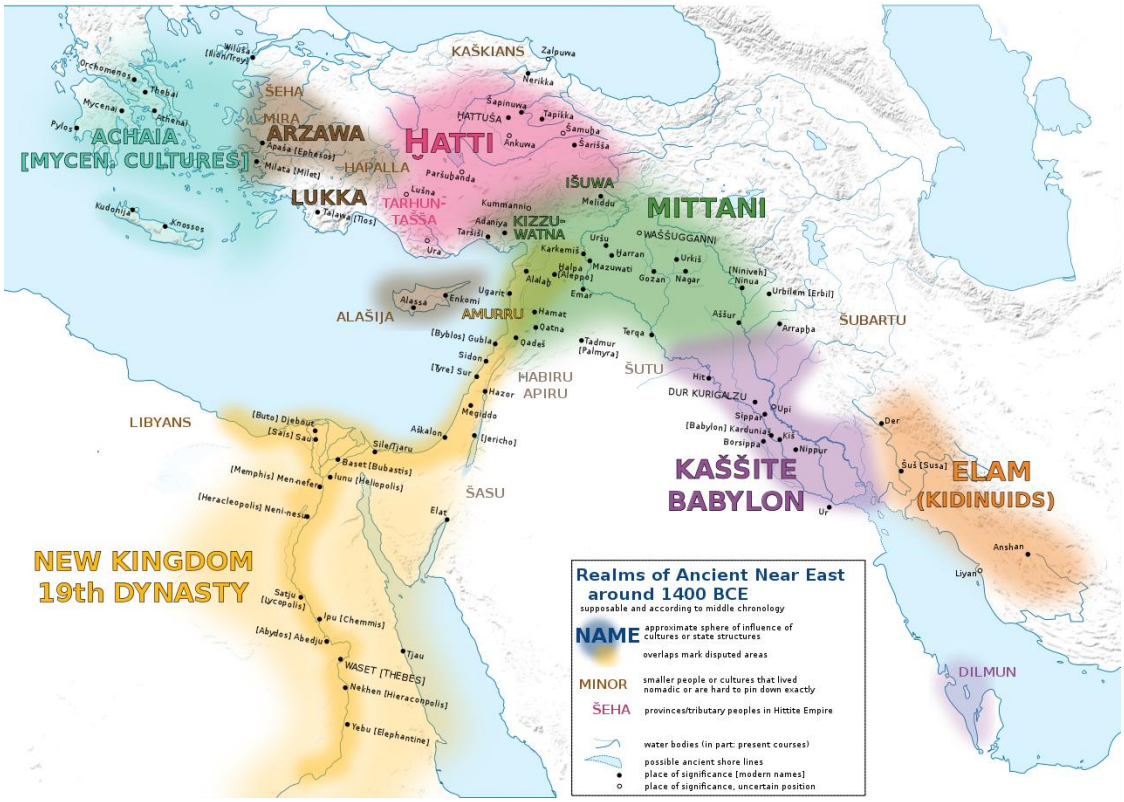
These deities played a central role in the kingdom's cultural identity, state rituals, and royal legitimacy.

Arzawa's interactions with the Hittite Empire were complex—marked by alliances, trade, and frequent warfare. At various times, Arzawa asserted its independence, only to be brought under **Hittite influence** or occupation. Despite these fluctuations, the kingdom retained its unique identity and religious traditions.

Below is a **chronological list of the known kings of Arzawa**, along with the **estimated years of their reign**, their **capital cities**, and **notable historical events**, particularly their **diplomatic or military interactions** with neighboring powers such as the **Hittite Empire**, **Mitanni**, and **Egypt**:

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Capital City	Notes / Significant Events
Kupanta-Kurunta	c. 1600–1550 BC	Apasa	Early Arzawan independence; later mythologized
Tarḫuntaradu	c. 1450–1430 BC	Apasa	Recognized as “Great King”; wrote to Amenhotep III
Tarkasnawa	c. 1320 BC	Mira	King of Mira; ruled under Arzawa; famous for Luwian seal
Uhha-Ziti	c. 1320–1300 BC	Apasa	Last major independent Arzawan king; fought Hittites

The Map of the Kingdom of Arzawa



Map of the Kingdoms of Arzawa, Hittite, Mitanni, Kassite, Elamite, and Subartu

Apasa was a city of the Arzawa Kingdom, now in ruins, located near the modern city of Selçuk in the İzmir Province of Anatolia.

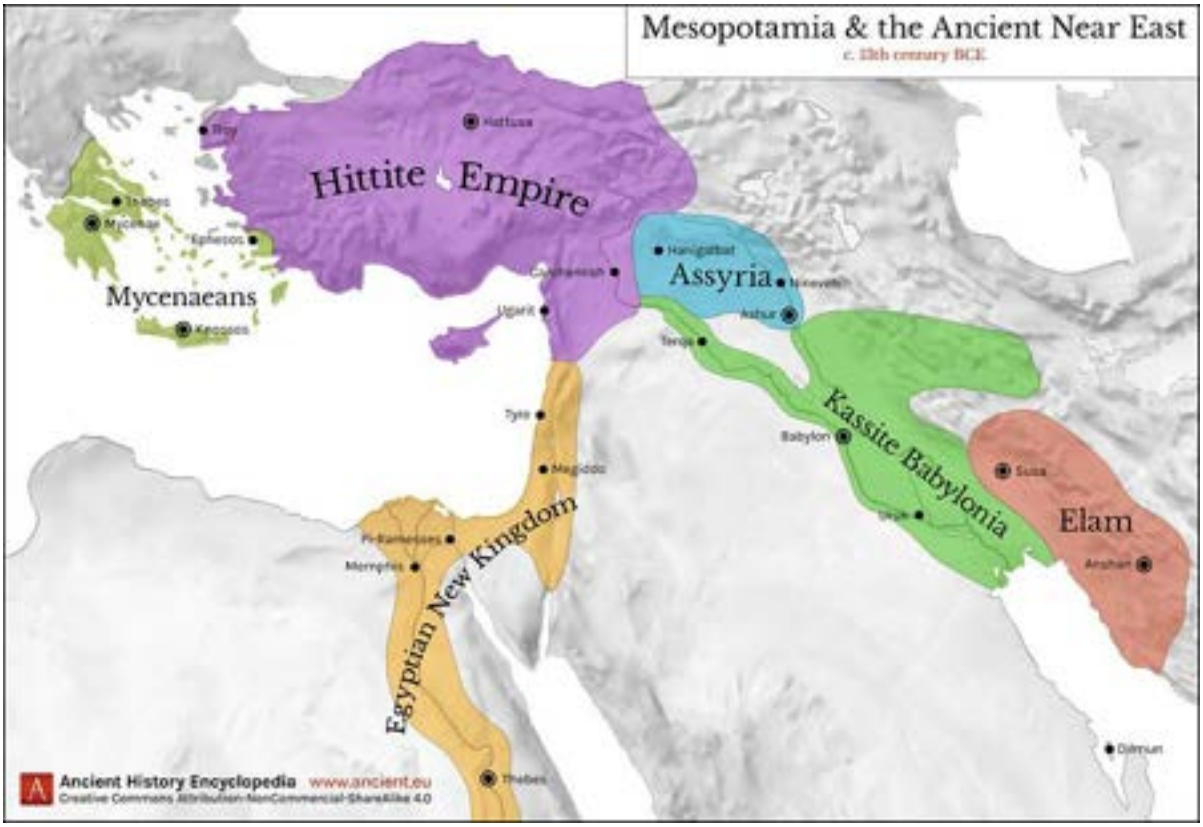
1.13 – The Hittite Authority (c. 1680–1178 BC)

The **Hittite Empire** was a formidable power in **Anatolia** during the second millennium BC. With its capital at **Hattusa**—located near modern-day **Boğazkale** in **Çorum Province**, Turkey—this empire rose to become one of the dominant forces in the ancient Near East. Its influence extended from the Aegean to the Euphrates, and at its height, the Hittite Empire rivaled the might of Egypt, Mitanni, and Assyria.

The Hittites spoke an **Indo-European language** and developed a sophisticated legal, political, and military system. They played a pivotal role in the **Bronze Age international system**, frequently engaging in diplomacy and war with neighboring powers.

Below is a **chronological list of major Hittite kings**, their **estimated reign periods**, **capital city**, and the **significant events** that marked their rule:

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period**	**Capital**	**Major Events During Reign**
Labarna I	1680 BC	Hattusa	Recognized as the founder of the Old Hittite Kingdom.
Hattusili I	1650 BC	Hattusa	Expanded the kingdom and raided Aleppo.
Mursili I	1620 BC	Hattusa	Conquered Babylon; assassinated upon his return.
Suppiluliuma I	1344–1322 BC	Hattusa	Engaged in conflict with Egypt.
Muwatalli II	1295–1272 BC	Hattusa	Fought against Ramesses II of Egypt in the Battle of Kadesh.
Hattusili III	1267–1237 BC	Hattusa	Concluded the first recorded peace treaty with Egypt.
Tudhaliya IV	1237–1209 BC	Hattusa	Faced Assyrian threats; initiated economic reforms to counter drought.
Hattusili III	1207–1178 BC	Hattusa	The known Hittite monarchy and empire collapsed during his reign.



Hattusa – The capital of the Hittite Empire between 1420–1200 BC, now located in the village of Boğazkale near the city of Çorum in Anatolia.

A statue of Šuppiluliuma, a Hittite king who ruled in the 14th century BC. The statue is currently housed in the Archaeological Museum of Hatay in Anatolia.

1.14 – The Kassite Civilization (c. 1595–1155 BC)

The **Kassites**—also known in historical texts as the **Kashshu** or **Kossaeans**—were an influential ancient people who played a pivotal role in the history of Mesopotamia. They originally inhabited the **Zagros Mountains**, corresponding to parts of **modern-day southern Kurdistan**, and later rose to prominence following their conquest of the **Old Babylonian Empire** around **1595 BC**.

For nearly **four centuries**, the Kassites ruled **Babylonia**, bringing an era of stability, continuity, and administrative reform. Their governance marked one of the longest dynastic reigns in Babylon's history, lasting from approximately **1595 to 1155 BC**. They adopted the **city of Babylon** as their official capital and integrated much of Babylonian religious and cultural life into their rule.

Another major urban center during their era was **Dur-Kurigalzu**, a city established near present-day **Baghdad** by **Kurigalzu I** and **Kurigalzu II**. This site became an important political and religious center during Kassite rule.

The Kassites assimilated into the religious traditions of Babylonia, worshipping **Marduk**, **Enlil**, and **Ishtar**, while also honoring their own deities such as **Shuqamuna** and **Shumaliya**, particularly associated with kingship and warfare.

Below is a list of notable Kassite rulers and key events during their reign:

Ruler	Reign Period (BC)	Capital City	Key Contributions / Events
Agum II (Agum-Kakrime)	c. 1500	Babylon	Retrieved the statue of Marduk from the Hittites; reasserted Kassite authority in Babylon.
Karaindash	c. 1410	Babylon	Commissioned temples and maintained diplomatic relations with Egypt.
Kudur-Enlil	Mid-13th century	Babylon	Built major temples and led a period of peace and prosperity.

Ruler	Reign Period (BC)	Capital City	Key Contributions / Events
Kashtiliash IV	1232–1225	Babylon	Engaged in conflict with Assyria; defeated by **Tukulti-Ninurta I** and deposed.
Enlil-nadin-ahi	1157–1155	Babylon	Final Kassite king; overthrown by the **Elamites**, marking the end of Kassite rule in Babylon.

After the fall of their Babylonian dynasty, the Kassites retained influence in parts of the **Zagros Mountains**, but never regained control over Mesopotamia. In external sources, especially among neighboring civilizations, they were commonly referred to as **Kashshu** or **Kashiu**.

Many historical and linguistic studies suggest that the Kassites were **ethnically related to the early Kurds** of southern Kurdistan. Their long-standing presence in the **Zagros highlands** and cultural continuity point to deep-rooted Kurdish ancestry—underscoring the ancient foundations of Kurdish civilization in the region.

Map of the Kassite Empire

1.15 – The Rule of Mitanni (c. 1500–1200 BC)

The **Mitanni civilization** was an influential ancient kingdom established by **Hurrian-speaking peoples** in the mid-second millennium BC. Centered in **northern Mesopotamia**, their territory encompassed vast regions of **southern, northern, and western Kurdistan**. The Mitanni kingdom emerged as a powerful force between two major empires of the ancient world: the **Hittite Empire** to the west and the **Egyptian Empire** to the south. Throughout its history, Mitanni actively engaged in diplomacy and warfare to maintain its independence and regional power.

The kingdom's capital was **Washukanni**, a city believed by most archaeologists to have been located near modern-day **Serekaniye** (in western Kurdistan), close to the **Khabur River**. Although the exact location remains debated, historical and archaeological evidence consistently places Washukanni in upper Mesopotamia—within the cultural and geographic sphere of Kurdistan.

Below is a list of notable Mitanni rulers, their approximate reign periods, and their key achievements:

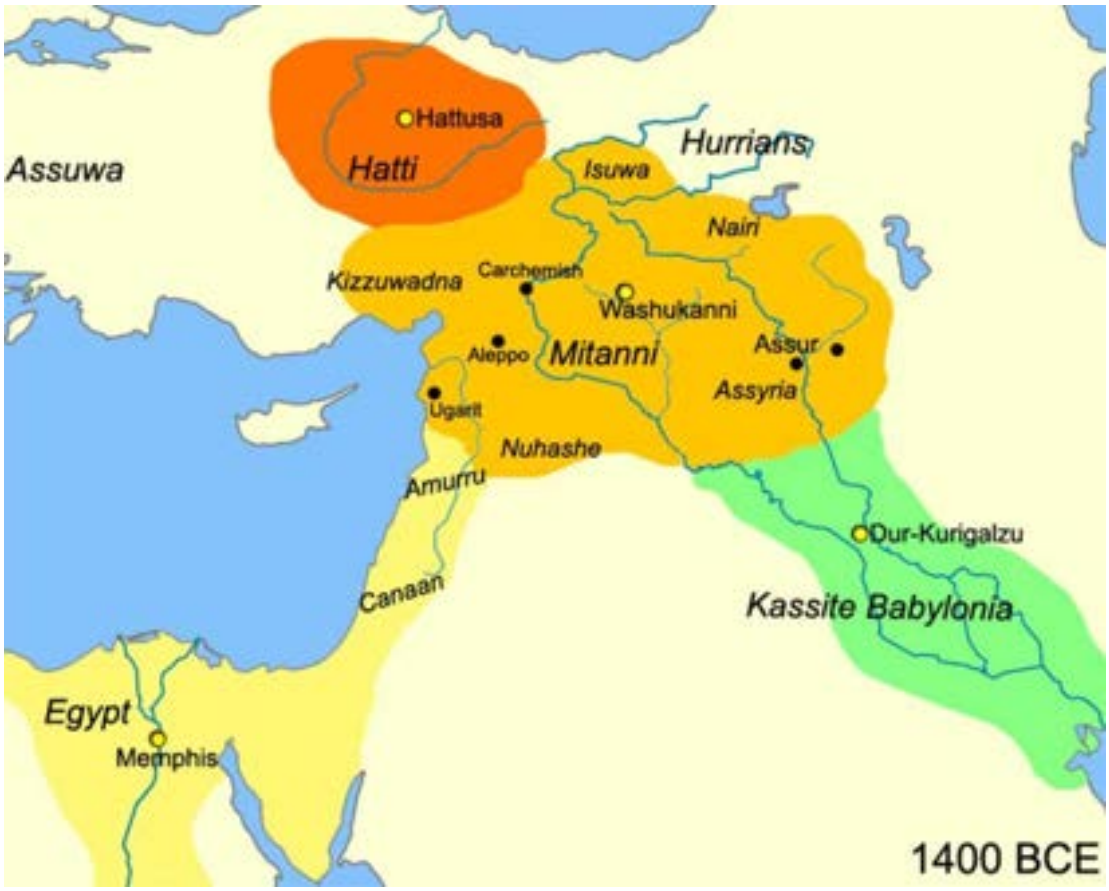
Ruler	Reign Period (Approx.)	Notable Contributions / Events
Kirta	c. 1500 BC	Founder of the Mitanni kingdom; established the foundation of Mitanni rule and independence.
Shuttarna I	c. 1480 BC	Strengthened internal administration and military defenses.
Shuttarna II	c. 1450 BC	Initiated diplomatic relations with **Pharaoh Amenhotep II** of Egypt, marking a high point in Mitanni-Egypt ties.
Artatama I	c. 1400 BC	Cemented alliance with **Pharaoh Thutmose IV** by marrying off his daughter into the Egyptian royal family.

Ruler	Reign Period (Approx.)	Notable Contributions / Events
Tushratta	c. 1350s BC	A powerful and ambitious ruler; maintained strong Egyptian alliances but was assassinated during Hittite incursions.
Shattiwaza	c. 1340 BC	Installed by the Hittites after internal turmoil; his reign marked the beginning of Mitanni's decline.

The **Mitanni Kingdom** lasted for approximately **three centuries** (c. 1500–1200 BC). Its rise reflected the sophisticated socio-political structures of Hurrian-Kurdic civilizations, but internal instability, dynastic struggles, and external pressures ultimately led to its downfall. By the late 13th century BC, the **Hittites**, expanding their empire across Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia, absorbed Mitanni territory and ended its independence.

Despite its eventual collapse, the legacy of Mitanni persists as a vital chapter in the broader historical narrative of **Kurdish heritage**—a testament to the long-standing statehood, diplomacy, and cultural depth of the ancient peoples of Kurdistan.

Note: Current international boundaries shown.
0 100 200 mi
0 100 200 km
EUROPE
BULGARIA
BLACK SEA
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
ASIA
AEGEAN SEA
GREECE
TURKEY
IRAN
MITANNI
CYPRUS
SYRIA
IRAQ
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.


Hattusa
Assuwa
Hatti
Hurrians
Isuwa
Nairi
Kizzuwadna
Carchemish
Washukanni
Aleppo
Mitanni
Assur
Assyria
Ugarit
Nuhashe
Amurru
Dur-Kurigalzu
Canaan
Kassite Babylonia
Egypt
Memphis
1400 BCE

A digital image of Mitanni warriors, discovered in the caves of the Hakkari mountains in Northern Kurdistan.

1.16 – The Reign of the Luwians (ca. 1430–700 BC)

The **Luwians** were an ancient Indo-European people who inhabited large parts of **western and southern Anatolia** during the **Bronze Age** and the early **Iron Age**. Their civilization played a vital role in shaping the cultural and political fabric of the **ancient Near East**, particularly in regions that now form modern-day **Turkey**, including **Çukurova**, **Lycia**, and the **Aegean coast**.

Rather than forming a single centralized empire, the Luwians governed a number of **independent kingdoms and principalities** that shared a common language, religion, and cultural heritage. Notable cities under Luwian influence included **Kizzuwatna** (modern-day Çukurova), **Arzawa** (near Selçuk), and **Lukka** (Lycia). While some of these cities retained autonomy, others fell under the **influence or direct rule of the Hittite Empire**, particularly during the Late Bronze Age.

The Luwians spoke the **Luwian language**, an **Indo-European tongue** that utilized both **cuneiform script** and **hieroglyphic writing systems**. Their inscriptions and diplomatic correspondence show strong Mesopotamian influence, especially in administrative and religious documents.

Religion and Cultural Identity

The Luwian belief system was **polytheistic** and bore many similarities to Hittite and Hurrian religious practices. Their pantheon included:

- **Tarhunza** – the storm god, equivalent to the Hittite **Tarhunt** and closely related to the Hurrian god **Teshub**.
- **Arma** – the moon god.
- **Kamrusepa** – a goddess associated with **magic, healing, and ritual purification**.

Temples, shrines, and stone reliefs—such as those found in **Karahöyük**, **Melid**, and **Karkemish**—depict their gods and ceremonial traditions. These artistic and archaeological remains highlight the richness of Luwian religious and civic life.

Notable Luwian Rulers and Political Developments

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Capital City	Major Events and Achievements
Tudhaliya I	1430–1400 BC	Hattusa	Oversaw early consolidation between Hittite and western Anatolian (Luwian) regions.
Šuppiluliuma I	1350–1322 BC	Hattusa	Incorporated Luwian territories into the Hittite Empire and expanded influence through diplomacy.
Kurunta	1300–1280 BC	Tarhuntassa	Declared independence from Hittite control; ruled autonomously over southern Luwian regions.

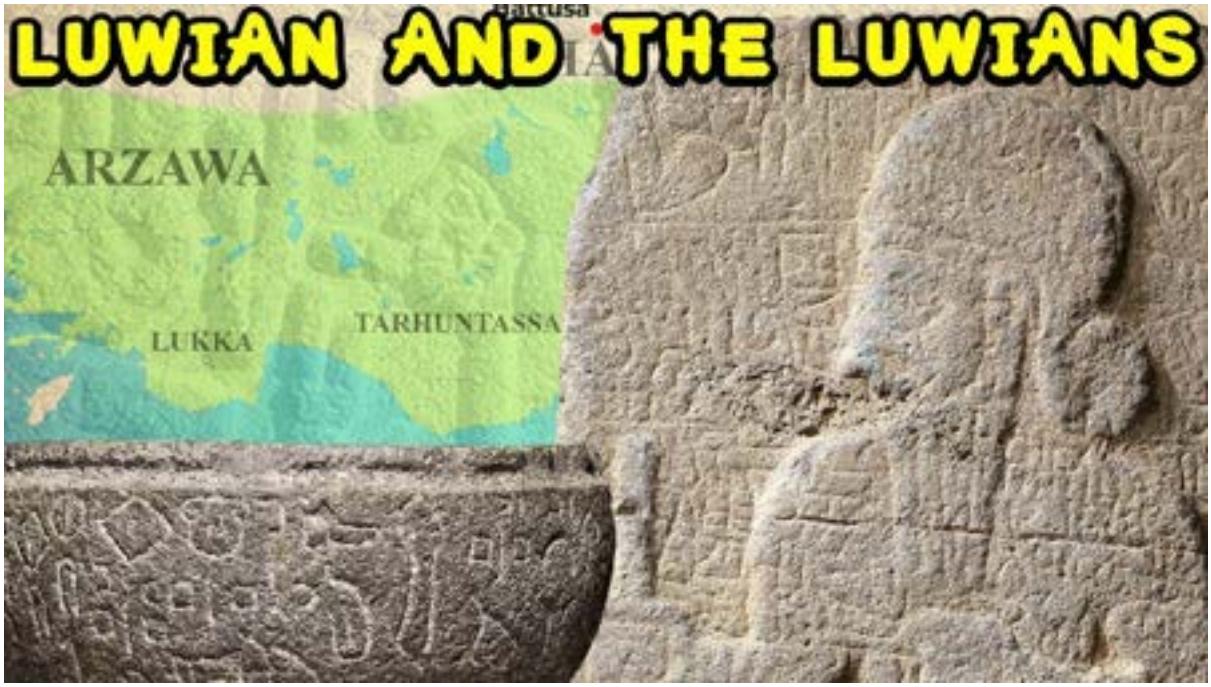
Ruler Name	Reign Period	Capital City	Major Events and Achievements
Unknown rulers	1180–700 BC	Melid, Karkemish, Tapikka-Kara	Following the fall of the Hittite Empire, various Neo-Hittite and Luwian city-states emerged, which were eventually conquered by the expanding **Neo-Assyrian Empire**.

Legacy

The **Luwians**, though often overshadowed by their Hittite counterparts, left a lasting mark on the ancient world through their art, language, religious syncretism, and regional political influence. Their post-Hittite successor states—sometimes referred to as **Neo-Hittite principalities**—continued to thrive for centuries before being absorbed into the growing Assyrian empire.

Their **Indo-European language**, distinctive mythology, and resilient city-states make the Luwians a key component in the complex historical and cultural mosaic of ancient **Kurdistan and Anatolia**.

Names of Cities, Authorities, and Regions of That Period



A remaining structure of Luwian authority

1.17 – The Rule of the Igihalkid Dynasty in Elam (c. 1400–1200 BC)

The **Igihalkid dynasty** was one of the most prominent ruling families in ancient Elamite history, governing parts of **southeastern Kurdistan** and **southwestern Iran** for nearly two centuries. Their reign marked a period of significant political engagement, particularly with the **Babylonian Empire**, and left behind enduring cultural and architectural achievements.

The ruling elite spoke **Elamite**, a southern dialect of the Kurdish linguistic family, and followed a **polytheistic religion** centered on deities such as **Napirasha** and **Inshushinak**. The Igihalkids maintained their capitals at **Susa (Shush)** and **Anshan (modern-day Shiraz)**.

Monarchs of the Igihalkid Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period	Key Historical Events
Igi-Halki	1400–1385 BC	Founder of the dynasty.
Pahir-Ishan	1385–1371 BC	Son of Igi-Halki; married daughter of Babylonian king Kurigalzu I.
Attar-Kitta	1371–1360 BC	Son of Igi-Halki.
Humban-Numena	1360–1341 BC	Son of Attar-Kitta; allied through marriage with Babylonian royalty.
Untash-Napirisha	1341–1310 BC	Son of Humban-Numena; married daughter of Burnaburiash II; launched Mesopotamian campaigns.
Kidin-Hutran I	1310–1296 BC	Defeated by Babylonian king Kurigalzu II.
Hurbatila	1296–1293 BC	Son of Pahir-Ishan.

Ruler	Reign Period	Key Historical Events
Unpahash-Napirasha	1293–1286 BC	Son of Pahir-Ishan.
Kidin-Hutran II	1286–1275 BC	Son of Unpahash-Napirasha.
Untash-Napirisha	1275–1240 BC	Son of Kidin-Hutran II; commissioned Chogha Zanbil ziggurat.
Kidin-Hutran III	1240–1200 BC	Waged war against Babylon; briefly occupied Babylonian territory.

Military Conflict and Dynastic Decline

Under **Kidin-Hutran III**, the dynasty reached its final military zenith. He led significant campaigns against the **Babylonian Empire**, including the temporary occupation of Babylonian land. However, the gains were short-lived. Defeat in subsequent battles led to Babylon's reconquest and a period of internal fragmentation within Elam.

Later, **Humban-Nimena** emerged as a notable ruler who resisted the **Assyrian king Sargon II**. His reign was challenged by internal rebellions, many of which aligned themselves with Babylonian interests. This internal instability weakened the kingdom, ultimately facilitating **Assyrian invasions** into Elamite territories.

The Legacy of Chogha Zanbil

The reign of **Untash-Napirisha (1275–1240 BC)** marked a cultural and architectural golden age. He ordered the construction of **Chogha Zanbil**, one of the most remarkable ziggurats of the ancient world.

- **Construction period**: ~20 years

- **Materials**: Primarily mud brick and stone imported from the **Zagros Mountains**, transported via the **Dez River**
- **Purpose**: Religious and astronomical (not residential or military)
- **Location**: Near present-day **Susa**, in the **Khuzestan province** of **Eastern Kurdistan**

Despite its monumental significance, **Chogha Zanbil**—a jewel of ancient Kurdish civilization—has been subject to neglect. While inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979**, it remains vulnerable to **looting, erosion, and political disregard**, largely due to the state's reluctance to highlight its Kurdish identity.

Collapse of the Igihalkid Dynasty

By 1200 BC, the Igihalkid dynasty had lost its grip on power. A combination of internal discord, **Babylonian retaliation**, and pressure from emerging empires led to the fragmentation and eventual dissolution of their rule. The once-strong Elamite kingdom was absorbed into the growing geopolitical contests of the Near East.

Nevertheless, the **Igihalkid legacy endures**—not only in the monumental ruins of Chogha Zanbil, but in their political resilience, cultural influence, and strategic diplomacy. Their dynasty represents a critical chapter in the ancient history of **Elam, Kurdistan**, and the broader Iranian plateau.

The Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat, situated near the ancient city of **Susa** in the **Khuzestan province of Eastern Kurdistan**, is among the **largest and oldest ziggurats in the world**. Dating back to the **13th century BC**, it was commissioned by **Elamite King Untash-Napirisha** and constructed over a span of **twenty years** during the height of the **Elamite civilization**.

The Chogha Zanbil ziggurat stands as a cultural treasure—not only of **Kurdistan**, but of **global heritage**. With its historical significance and architectural grandeur, it holds the potential to be recognized as one of the world's foremost archaeological and tourist destinations.

Yet, despite its value, the site has suffered from **chronic neglect**, **severe damage**, and **looting**—as evident in the photographic documentation. This disregard is not accidental. Situated on **Kurdish soil**, Chogha Zanbil has been deliberately overlooked by the authorities occupying Kurdistan.

The **intentional marginalization** of this monument reflects a broader strategy to suppress Kurdish history. Acknowledging and preserving such a site would inevitably expose the deep-rooted presence of the Kurdish people in the region, along with their historic legacy of **civilization, autonomy, and sovereign rule**—long predating foreign invasions.

The present-day ruins of **Chogha Zanbil** extend into the southern outskirts of **Dezful**, a region that once served as a **capital, fortress, and cultural hub** for the Kurdish people. Despite its historical and archaeological importance, the site remains in a **state of severe neglect**. Although **UNESCO inscribed Chogha Zanbil as a World Heritage Site in 1979**, no substantial measures have been taken to ensure its protection or conservation.

The site remains **exposed and vulnerable**, with no permanent oversight or barriers to prevent deterioration or vandalism. To date, the **Iranian authorities have failed to implement meaningful preservation efforts**, leaving this invaluable piece of Kurdish and human heritage at constant risk.

1.18 – The Rule of the Shutrukid Dynasty in Elam Between 1200–1100 BCE

The Shutrukid Dynasty is regarded as one of the most significant periods in the revival of the Elamite state. During this era, military conquests and cultural advancement became among the defining characteristics of the kingdom. The dynasty remained continuously engaged in conflicts and relations with Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Assyria. It is worth noting that the capital of this kingdom was the city of Susa (Shush), and their spoken language was Lower Kurdish.

The following is a list of the well-known rulers of the Shutrukid Dynasty, along with the years of their reigns and the major events of this period.

Rulers	Reign Period	Major Events
Shutruk-Nahhunte	1185–1155 BCE	Expanded his rule from Elam into Mesopotamia. Conquered Babylon and brought the Stele of Naram-Sin and the Code of Hammurabi to Susa. This era became known as a Golden Age due to its military and cultural achievements.
Kutir-Nahhunte II	1155–1150 BCE	Continued military campaigns toward Babylon and seized the statue of Marduk during these wars.
Shilhak-Inshushinak I	1150–1120 BCE	Expanded Elamite authority and remained actively involved in Mesopotamian affairs. Writing in the Kurdish language using cuneiform script began during this period.
Humban-Nimena	1120–1110 BCE	Fought against Assyrian forces and resisted Sargon II. Known for supporting Babylonian independence from Assyria.
Hutelutush-Inshushinak	1110–1100 BCE	Faced the invasion of the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar I. Lost the statue of Marduk, and Elamite authority declined following this invasion.

Shutruk-Nahhunte, who ruled this dynasty beginning in 1185 BCE, expanded his kingdom eastward and westward across the region. He conquered Babylon, captured its capital, and transferred the Stele of Naram-Sin and the Code of Hammurabi to Susa. The reign of Shutruk-Nahhunte is recognized as a Golden Age marked by the military and cultural strength of Elam.

During the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak I, around 1230 BCE, Elamite writing in cuneiform script was developed, and literacy and writing in the Elamite language were further promoted.

1.19 – The Migration of Persian-Aryan Tribes into Media (c. 1000–500 BC)

Archaeological and historical records suggest that, prior to 1000 BC, the region historically known as **Media**—which encompassed parts of present-day **Iran, Kurdistan, and Azerbaijan**—was inhabited exclusively by the **Medes (Kurds)** and the **Baluch**. These two indigenous ethnic groups dominated the mountainous landscapes of the area and maintained control over its highland territories.

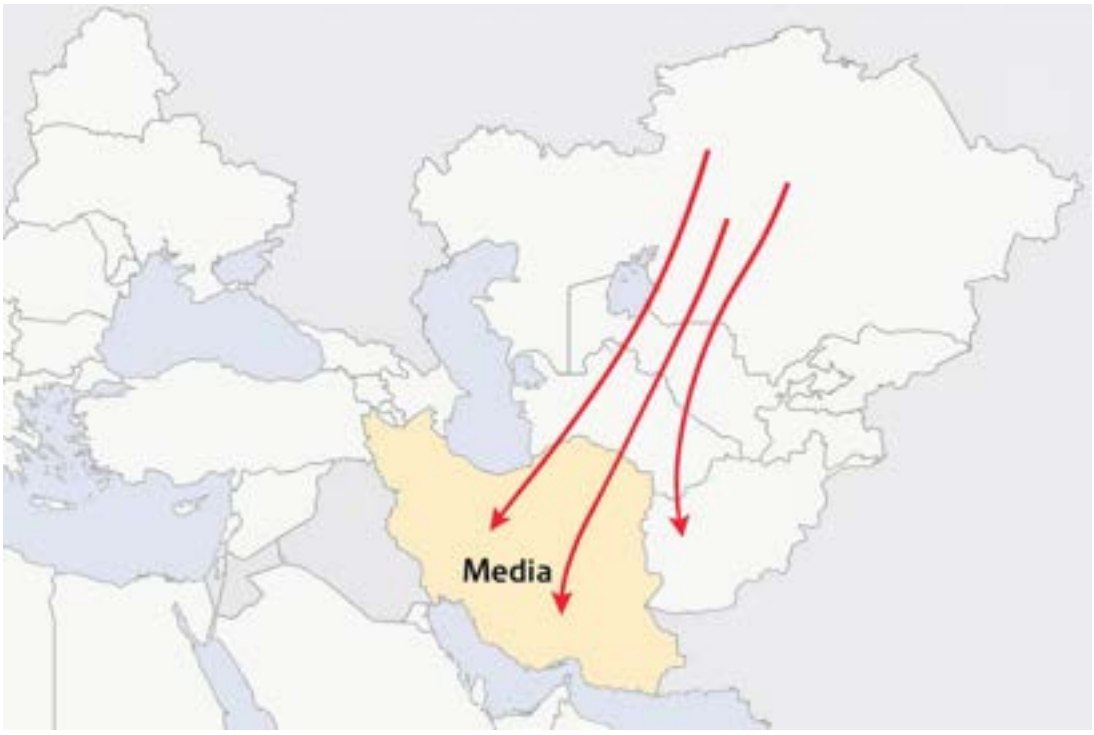
Beginning around the **10th century BC**, waves of **Indo-Aryan tribes**—later identified as **Persians** and **Tajiks**—began migrating from **Central Asia** into Media. These migrations were driven largely by **economic hardship** and the search for more fertile lands. The newcomers initially settled in **northern Media**, particularly in regions like **Khorasan**, before expanding gradually into **southern areas** such as **Isfahan** and **Bandar-e Run** (modern-day **Bandar Abbas**).

At the time, the **Medes maintained political and tribal authority** over the region, while the Persian and Tajik settlers arrived in relatively small, uncoordinated groups. Due to the absence of immediate conflict and the vastness of the territory, these groups were able to settle with little resistance.

The **Medes**, primarily pastoral and self-sufficient, had long sustained a way of life free from famine or foreign encroachment. In contrast, the **Persian and Tajik migrants**,

having endured repeated cycles of drought and scarcity, saw the **fertile Median plateau** as a land of opportunity. Over time, they began relocating their families, livestock, and possessions to the area.

Between **1000 and 500 BC**, this slow and steady migration reshaped the **demographic and political composition** of Media. Dozens of Persian tribal confederations from regions corresponding to **modern-day Tajikistan and Kazakhstan** established permanent settlements in Median territory. This transformation played a pivotal role in the **formation of later Persian empires**, as the balance of power began to shift from the indigenous Median tribes to the newly arrived Aryan groups.



The dashed arrows on the above map indicate the migration of the Persians from Central Asia to Iran, Afghanistan, and the surrounding region between 1000 and 500 BC.

1.20 – The Rule of the Kadusii (c. 1000–300 BC)

The **Kadusii**—also known in classical sources as **Cadusii** or **Curdossi**—were an ancient **Kurdish** people who inhabited the southwestern coast of the **Caspian Sea**, within a region that now includes **Gilan, Ardewel (Ardabil)**, and parts of **northwestern**

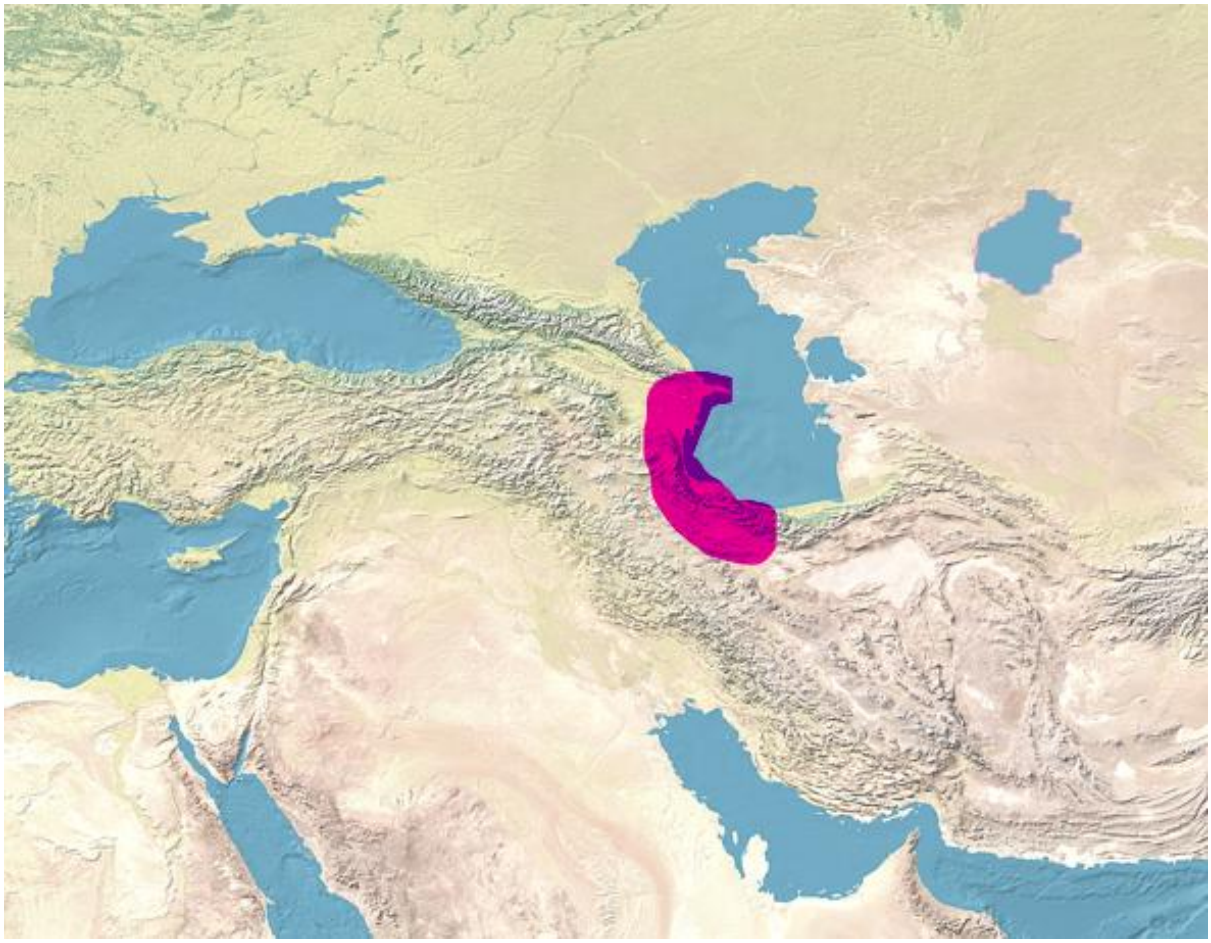
Mazandaran in modern-day **Iran**. Their territory spanned the **Talesh** and **Khalkhal** mountain ranges, extending to the lowland forests and rivers of the coastal plain. This difficult and densely forested terrain played a critical role in enabling the Kadusii to maintain their **political independence** and tribal autonomy for centuries.

Numerous **classical historians**, including **Strabo, Plutarch, Xenophon,** and **Arrian**, referred to the Kadusii as **formidable highland warriors**. Though they were at times loosely affiliated with the **Median Empire**, they consistently resisted the expanding control of the **Achaemenid Persians**. The Kadusii are historically recorded as having:

- **Rebelled against Cyrus the Great**, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire.
- **Defied the rule of Darius I**, refusing to submit to central Persian authority.
- **Joined the Satraps' Revolt** against **Artaxerxes II** in the **4th century BC**.

Rather than forming a centralized monarchy, the Kadusii governed themselves as a **confederation of tribal clans**, each led by **chieftains** or **councils of elders**. Their language was an **early Kurdish dialect**, closely related to **Median**, and their culture was shaped by a tradition of tribal self-governance, pastoralism, and territorial defense.

Although often overlooked in mainstream historical narratives, the Kadusii played a **strategic role in preserving local sovereignty** along the volatile frontier between the Iranian plateau and the Caspian littoral. Their resistance to imperial domination laid the foundation for the **centuries-long tradition of Kurdish autonomy** in the **Zagros and Caspian highlands**. In this sense, the Kadusii can be viewed as a **precursor** to later Kurdish principalities that would emerge throughout the region during subsequent historical periods.



Map of the Kadussi

1.21 – The Kayanian Monarchy (c. 900–500 BC)

The **Kayanian (Kiyani) dynasty** represents a semi-legendary yet culturally significant royal lineage that ruled from approximately **900 to 500 BC** over parts of **northern and eastern Iran**, including areas of present-day **Turkmenistan**. While often situated within the mythological framework of Persian epics, the Kayanian kings played an important role in shaping the **spiritual and political identity** of the early Iranian plateau.

Initially skeptical of emerging religious reformers, the Kayanian rulers eventually adopted **Zoroastrianism**, which became the **official state religion** during their reign. This transition marked a turning point in the region's ideological development and laid the foundation for future Persian religious and imperial models.

The following table presents a summary of the Kayanian monarchs, their reign periods, capital cities, religious affiliations, and key historical or legendary events:

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Capital	Religion	Key Events
Kay Qobad	900–800 BC	Alborz Mountains	Early Zoroastrianism	Fought **Afrasiyab**, king of Turan; established rule over northern Media.
Kay Kāvus	800–700 BC	Mazandaran	Zoroastrianism	Repelled Turanian invasions with the legendary warrior **Rustam**.
Kay Khosrow	700–650 BC	Zabol (Sistan)	Zoroastrianism	Defeated Afrasiyab; revered for justice; voluntarily abdicated the throne.
Lohrasp	650–600 BC	Balkh (Afghanistan)	Zoroastrianism	Faced internal dissent; ultimately fell in battle.
Goshtasp	600–550 BC	Balkh	State Zoroastrianism	Patron of **Zoroaster**; engaged in wars with **Arjasb**, king of Turan.
Bahman	550–500 BC	Balkh	Zoroastrianism	Continued military campaigns across **Khorasan** against regional rivals.

According to traditional accounts, the prophet **Zoroaster** was **killed in 570 BC** during an attack on **Balkh** by forces led by **Arjasb**, the Turanian ruler. While the historicity of this event remains debated, it is deeply embedded in **Iranian cultural memory** and has been preserved in both oral traditions and religious literature.

The Kayanian monarchy is significant not only for its legendary battles and rulers but also for its role in **advancing Zoroastrianism**, reinforcing the union of **religion and**

state power, and influencing later dynasties in Iran. It marks a key period in the evolution of Iranian identity, blending myth, faith, and early political organization.

1.22 – The Kingdom of Urartu (c. 860–585 BC)

The **Kingdom of Urartu** was a formidable ancient state that rose to prominence in the highlands surrounding **Lake Van**, encompassing regions of modern-day **Armenia**, **eastern Turkey**, and **northern and eastern Kurdistan**. From the **9th to the 6th centuries BC**, Urartu developed into a militarized and centralized monarchy, exerting control over a vast mountainous area stretching from the **Caucasus Mountains** in the north to the **central Zagros Mountains** in the south.

The **capital city**, **Tushpa** (modern **Van**), served as the political and religious center of the kingdom. While the **ruling dynasty** was ethnically Urartian, the **military and administrative leadership** included numerous figures from the **Mannaean (Kurdish) tribes**, particularly in the southern provinces. This joint structure reflected a **hybrid political system** that integrated local Kurdish leadership into the central authority of the Urartian state.

The **Urartian language**, closely related to **Hurrian**, was used for official inscriptions, administration, and religious rituals. The Urartians followed a **polytheistic belief system**, with major deities including:

- **Ḫaldi** – the chief God of war and kingship,
- **Teisheba** – the storm God,
- **Shivini** – the solar deity.

Urartian kings were considered **semi-divine figures** who mediated between the gods and the people, reinforcing both religious and royal authority through monumental architecture, inscriptions, and military conquest.

List of Urartian Rulers and Their Contributions

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Major Contributions
Arame	860–840 BC	Founder of the Urartian kingdom; established the first royal lineage.
Lutipri	840–825 BC	Expanded Urartu's territorial base and centralized power.
Sarduri I	825–810 BC	Initiated military campaigns against **Assyria**.
Menua	810–785 BC	Strengthened internal control; built fortifications and irrigation systems.
Argishti I	785–760 BC	Extended Urartian power across the Armenian Highlands; built the fortress of Erebuni.
Sarduri II	760–740 BC	Defended Urartu against continued Assyrian pressure.
Rusa I	740–714 BC	Suffered defeats by Assyria; marked the beginning of Urartian decline.
Argishti II	714–680 BC	Continued resistance to Assyrian expansion; attempted internal reforms.
Rusa II	680–645 BC	Faced growing internal unrest and loss of territory.
Rusa III	645–620 BC	Led a weakened Urartu; ultimately overrun by Assyrian forces.
Rusa IV	620–585 BC	Final monarch; kingdom collapsed under foreign and internal pressures.

Ethnic Composition and Historical Legacy

Modern **Armenian national identity** is often retrospectively associated with the **Urartian civilization**. However, archaeological and linguistic evidence indicates a **multiethnic composition**, particularly in the kingdom's southern and eastern regions.

The **Manneans (Kurdish tribes)**, who inhabited the Zagros foothills, played a central role in the **military command** and local governance under Urartian authority.

The labeling of Urartu as a purely “Armenian” state is a **modern construct**, shaped by 19th and 20th-century nationalist historiography. In historical reality, the **Urartian state was ethnically diverse**, and its territory overlapped predominantly with **Kurdish-inhabited regions** of the ancient Near East.

Map of the Urartian Kingdom's Domain

1.23 – The Rule of the Manneans (850–616 BC)

The **Manneans** were an influential ancient people who inhabited the **Zagros Mountain range**, primarily in the region stretching from **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Sanandaj**, and **Wirme (Urmia)** to **Hawler (Erbil)**. Their kingdom, known as **Mannea**, flourished between **850 and 616 BC**. Although modest in size, Mannea occupied a **strategically vital location**, nestled between the dominant powers of **Assyria**, **Urartu**, and later the **Median**

Empire. This positioning made the Manneans pivotal actors in the regional power dynamics of the 9th to 7th centuries BC.

Political Landscape and Capital City

The **capital of Mannea** was the city of **Izirtu**, located in the area of present-day **Saqqez** in Eastern Kurdistan. Izirtu is frequently mentioned in **Assyrian inscriptions**, especially during the reign of **Sargon II** of Assyria, who attacked and plundered the city around **716 BC** as part of his broader campaign in the Zagros.

Throughout their history, the Manneans maintained a **shifting relationship** with their powerful neighbors. At times, they formed **alliances with the Assyrian Empire**, acting as vassals or buffer states; at other times, they actively **resisted Assyrian aggression**. The Manneans also had frequent confrontations with the **Urartian Kingdom** to the north and eventually came under **Median dominance** toward the end of their political existence.

Notable Rulers

Several Mannean kings are recorded in historical texts, including:

- **Iranzo** – A ruler known for early consolidation of Mannean power.
- **Aza** – Engaged in both diplomacy and conflict with neighboring states.
- **Ullusunu** – Noted for complex dealings with Assyrian authorities and internal stabilization efforts.

These kings skillfully navigated a geopolitical landscape dominated by larger imperial powers, employing strategies of **military resistance**, **political alliance**, and **territorial defense** to preserve Mannean autonomy for nearly two centuries.

Language, Religion, and Legacy

The **Mannean people** spoke a **Hurrian-based language**, and although their linguistic heritage is now extinct, many scholars consider it a precursor or close relative to early **Kurdish dialects**, particularly those of the **Median cultural sphere**.

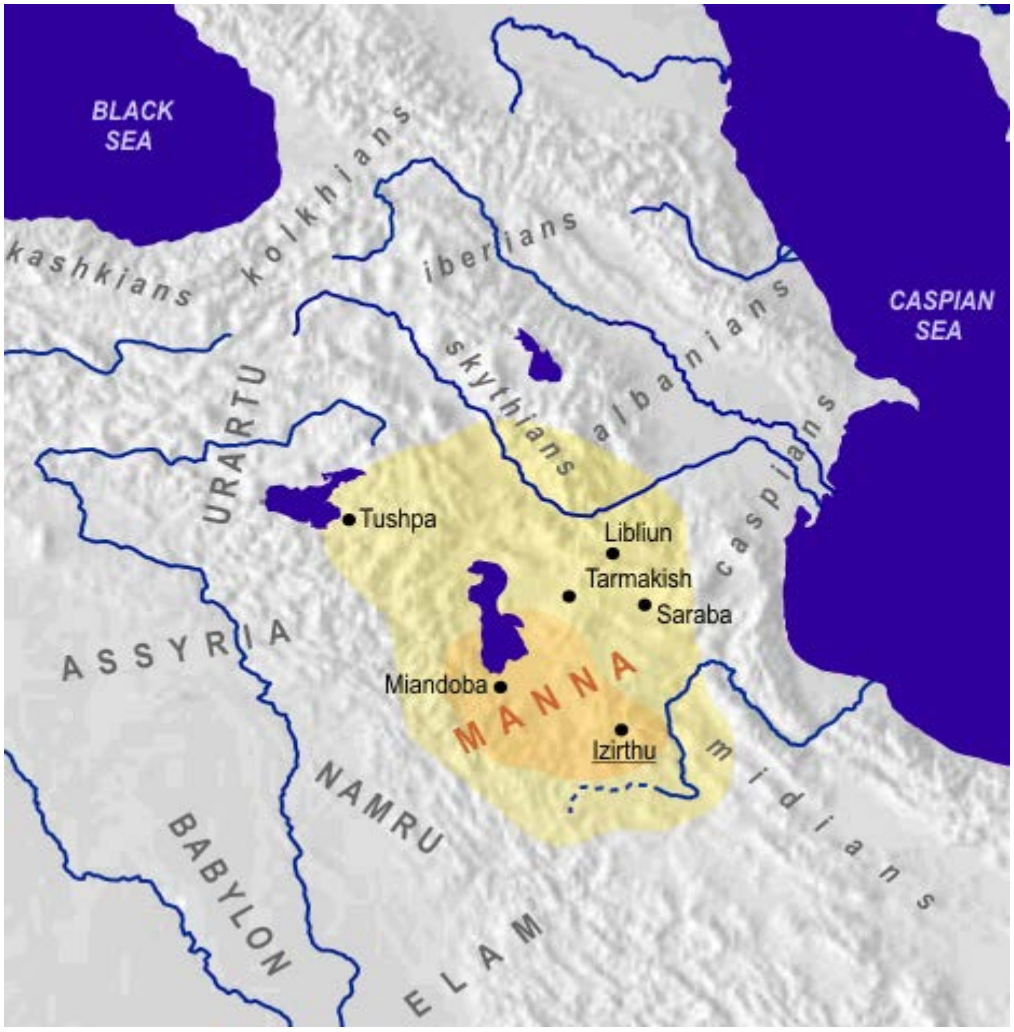
Their religious beliefs were reportedly **monotheistic**—a rare characteristic for the region at the time—and distinct from the polytheistic traditions of neighboring empires.

Following the **rise of the Median Empire**, the Manneans were eventually **absorbed culturally and linguistically** into the expanding Median identity. Over time, their unique language and political designation disappeared from historical records, but their **legacy lives on** in the **ethno-cultural heritage of the Kurds**, particularly those in the **central Zagros region**.

Decline and Absorption into the Median Empire

After **616 BC**, as Median influence expanded, the Manneans ceased to be referenced as a separate entity in historical records. From this point forward, they are documented under the broader ethnonym of the **Medes**, signaling both political unification and cultural integration.

An Archaeological Figurine from the Mannean Dynasty



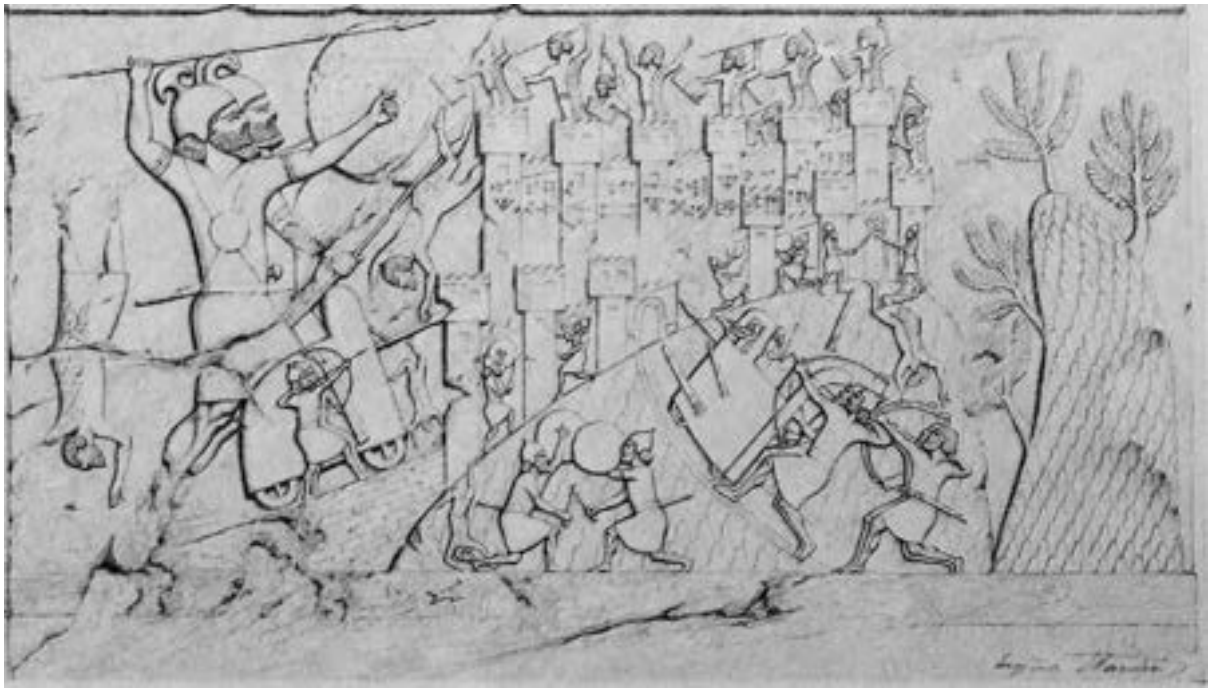
Map of the Mannean Kingdom

Notable Rulers of the Mannean Kingdom

The following table presents the known monarchs of the **Mannean dynasty**, including their reign periods, capital city, and key historical events associated with their rule:

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Capital	Key Events
Eranzu	716–709 BC	Izirtu (modern Saqqez, Eastern Kurdistan)	Killed during conflicts with Assyria under Sargon II. His reign ended amid internal rebellions and weakening authority.

Ruler's Name	Reign Period	Capital	Key Events
Aza *(son of Eranzu)*	709 BC	Izirtu	His rule was short-lived. He was overthrown and killed by domestic rivals aligned with the Assyrians.
Ualli	709–700 BC	Izirtu	Appointed by Sargon II after Aza's death. He maintained peaceful relations with Assyria but died of natural causes.
Ahšari *(possibly Ulusunu)*	Late 8th century BC	Izirtu	Initially rebelled against Assyrian control, but was later captured and exiled by the Assyrian authorities.
Mani	7th century BC	Izirtu	His reign was marked by repeated Assyrian incursions. Ultimately, Assyria annexed the territory and ended Mannean independence.



The Assyrian Invasion of the Mannean Kingdom

1.24 – The Rule of the Neo-Elamite Dynasty (c. 760–688 BC)

After the fall of the **Shutrukid dynasty** of Elam around **1100 BC**, the region came under the control of successive empires—first the **Babylonians**, then the **Assyrians**. For nearly **three and a half centuries**, Elam's sovereignty remained dormant under foreign occupation.

However, in approximately **760 BC**, the Elamites launched a successful uprising and re-established an **independent dynasty**, initiating what historians now refer to as the **Neo-Elamite period**. This resurgence restored **Susa (modern-day Shush)** as the capital of the Elamite kingdom. During this era, the **administrative and spoken language** of the court and ruling elite was a **southern Kurdish dialect**, closely related to **modern Luri and Laki**.

This period was marked by both diplomatic and military engagement with neighboring powers, particularly **Babylon and Assyria**, as Elam sought to defend its sovereignty and regional influence in a volatile geopolitical landscape.

Below is a summary of the known monarchs of the **Neo-Elamite dynasty**, their reign periods, and notable developments during their rule:

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Significant Events
Humban-Tehrra	760–743 BC	Founder of the Neo-Elamite dynasty; his reign is documented in Babylonian historical annals.
Humban-Nikash I	743–730 BC	Strengthened ties with **Babylon** in response to growing **Assyrian imperial aggression**.
Humban-Minanu	730–717 BC	Continued the pro-Babylonian alliance; supported Babylonian resistance against **Assyria**.
Shutruk-Nahhunte	717–699 BC	Struggled with internal factionalism and external assaults; ultimately overthrown by **Assyrian forces**.

Although the Neo-Elamite dynasty was relatively short-lived, it represented a **revival of native Elamite-Kurdish governance**, culture, and resistance after centuries of occupation. The dynasty's defiance against imperial forces—particularly **Assyria**, then at the height of its power—epitomizes the enduring **resilience of the Elamite-Kurdish legacy**.

1.25 – Kawa the Blacksmith and the Emergence of Kurdish National Identity (c. 700 BC)

The legend of **Kawa the Blacksmith** stands as one of the most enduring and powerful symbols of **Kurdish national identity**. Set around **700 BC**, it tells the story of an uprising against a tyrant and the birth of a people's collective consciousness.

At the heart of the tale is **Zuhak (also known as Zahhak)**, a brutal and despotic ruler who governed the region of **Nineveh** (present-day **Mosul**) with extreme cruelty. His domain extended across parts of **Mesopotamia** and the **Zagros Mountains**, where he oppressed the **Mannean** and **Assyrian** populations alike. According to legend, Zuhak claimed to suffer from a mysterious affliction: two serpents had grown from his shoulders and could only be appeased by daily feeding on the brains of young men from the Zagros region.

In truth, these serpents were festering wounds—a symbolic fabrication used to **justify systematic slaughter**. Each day, two youths were selected and sacrificed. However, the individual tasked with the executions, moved by conscience, began **saving one of the two victims**. Mixing the brain of one with that of a sheep to deceive the tyrant, he secretly sent the spared youth into hiding in the **Zagros highlands**, particularly the **Qandil Mountains**. Among the first to be saved was a young man named **Kurd**, and over time, the group he joined adopted his name as their collective identity—the Kurds.

The legend reaches its climax when **Zuhak executes the two sons of Kawa**, a humble yet courageous blacksmith from **the Bistun region of Kirmashan**. Enraged by this personal loss and inspired by years of oppression, **Kawa mobilized the people**.

Journeying to Nineveh, he rallied the oppressed, including the man who had been saving the youths. Together, they formed a **unified resistance**, stormed the citadel, and in a decisive act of rebellion, **Kawa struck down Zuhak with his hammer**, bringing an end to his reign of terror.

On the **first day of spring**, Kawa **lit a great fire atop the fortress**, signaling freedom to the people of Mesopotamia and the Zagros. This moment became a defining symbol of liberation and the origin of **Newroz**, the Kurdish New Year, which is still celebrated to this day as a representation of resistance, renewal, and identity.

After Zuhak's fall, a **brief golden era of peace** followed. At the age of sixty, Kawa appointed **Kurd**, then thirty years old, as the new ruler and declared **Ecbatana (modern Hamadan)** the capital. During this time, **Fereydun Jamshidi**, a Persian noble of **Tajik descent**, expressed allegiance to Kawa and extended a formal invitation to celebrate the victory in **Anshan** (modern-day **Shiraz**). Nearly **200 Kurdish leaders** attended the festival, warmly received by over **1,000 Persian hosts**. The event featured **equestrian competitions, games, and ceremonies** honoring the new era of freedom.

However, the celebration turned into betrayal. During the feast, **Fereydun poisoned the Kurdish guests**, and within two hours, the entire delegation was killed. The **Persians seized control**, claimed Kawa's legacy as their own, and began the **systematic erasure of Kurdish history** from the record.

While modern historians often categorize the tale of **Kawa the Blacksmith as myth**, its endurance across **2,700 years of Kurdish oral tradition** speaks to a deeper truth. Newroz is not merely a symbolic festival—it is the **living memory of resistance and Kurdish nationhood**. The political dismissal of this narrative as folklore serves the interests of states that have long sought to **deny and suppress Kurdish identity**.

It is important to recognize that **ancient histories were recorded by court scribes loyal to empires**, not by independent chroniclers of the Kurdish experience. Even in **Ferdowsi's Shahnameh**, the tale of Kawa is retold through a Persian lens—**distorting or omitting the Kurdish agency** that lies at its core.

Centuries of **colonial occupation and cultural erasure** have sought to marginalize Kurdish contributions to history. But the story of Kawa remains a powerful allegory for the Kurdish struggle—**a symbol of defiance, solidarity, and justice**. Its persistence in Kurdish collective memory reflects **historical truths embedded in myth**: truths about resistance against tyranny, unity among the oppressed, and the **unbreakable will to reclaim sovereignty**.

The continued rejection of this legacy by dominant narratives **reveals a persistent fear**—that, like Kawa, the Kurds may once again **rise to reclaim their rightful place** in history.

1.26 – The Median Monarchical Empire (678–550 BC)

The **Median Empire**, established in the late 7th century BC, marked the first large-scale Kurdish-led state in ancient Near Eastern history. In **678 BC**, **Deioces** (*Diāko*), a visionary leader and unifier of the **Median tribes**, led a revolt against **Tajik-Persian** rule and declared the foundation of a centralized Median monarchy.

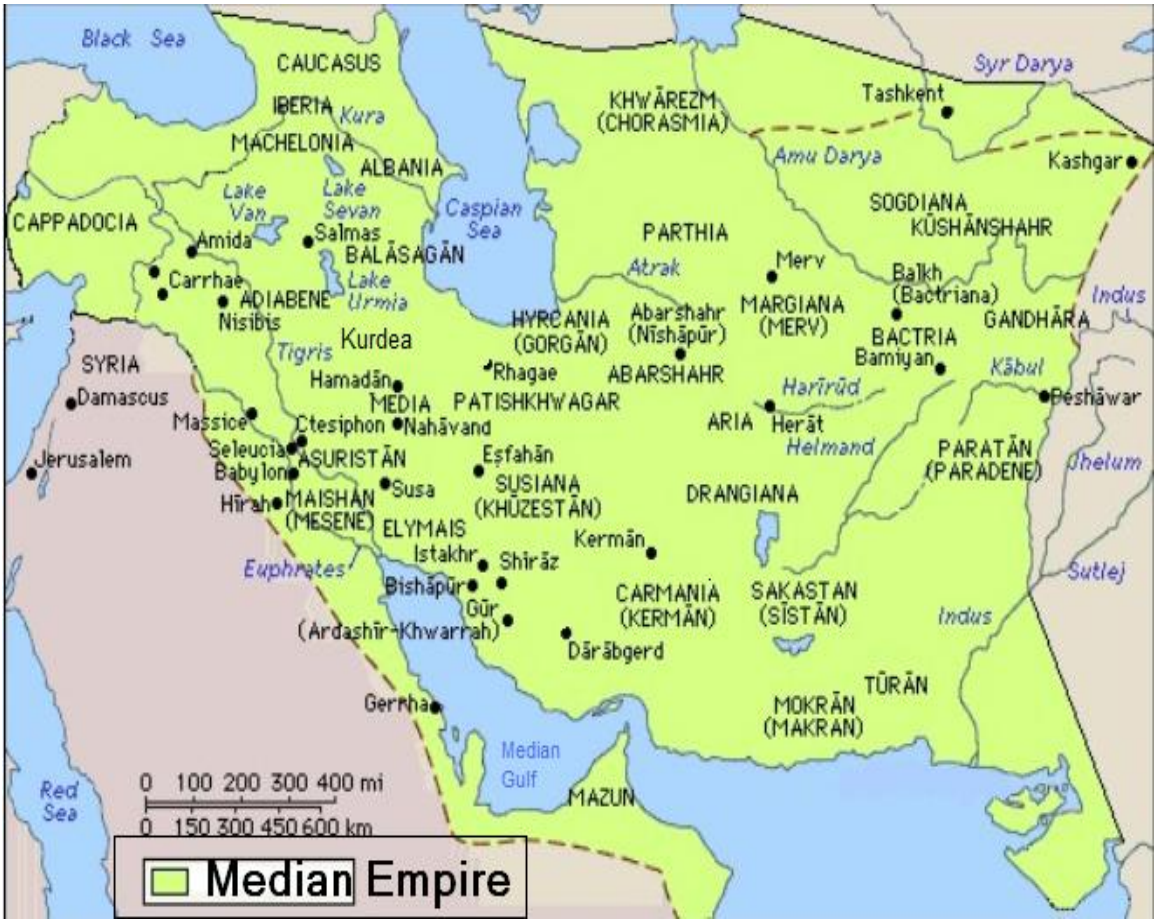
Deioces successfully liberated **Ecbatana** (modern-day **Hamadan**) from Persian control and proclaimed it the capital of the new empire. On the **first day of spring**, a date symbolically tied to renewal and national awakening, he officially declared the establishment of the **Median Kingdom**. Deioces ruled with wisdom and diplomacy for **31 years**, until his natural death in **647 BC**. His legacy endured through his son and successor, **Phraortes** (*Fravartish*), who inherited the throne and the vision of a united Median state.

Upon ascending the throne, **Phraortes** launched a series of campaigns to expand the empire's influence. He successfully annexed parts of the **Assyrian Empire**, consolidating power and extending the Median domain. However, during a prolonged military confrontation with the **Assyrians**, he was **killed in 625 BC** by the Assyrian king **Ashurbanipal**, after 22 years of rule.

Map of the Median Empire in 620 BC

This period saw the Median state expand into a formidable regional power, asserting dominance across much of **Iran, Kurdistan, and Mesopotamia**.

Following Phraortes' death, his son **Cyaxares I** (*Kaykhosrow I*) assumed the throne. A brilliant military strategist and statesman, **Cyaxares I** forged a powerful alliance with the **Babylonians** and, in **612 BC**, successfully **toppled the Assyrian Empire**, bringing about one of the most significant geopolitical shifts of the ancient world. Under his leadership, the Median Empire reached the **pinnacle of its power** and territorial expansion.



Map of the Median Kingdom in 612 BC

At its height, the empire stretched from the **Mediterranean Sea to the Caspian**, covering vast regions of **modern-day Iran, Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan**, as well as parts of **Armenia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan**, and other Central Asian territories.

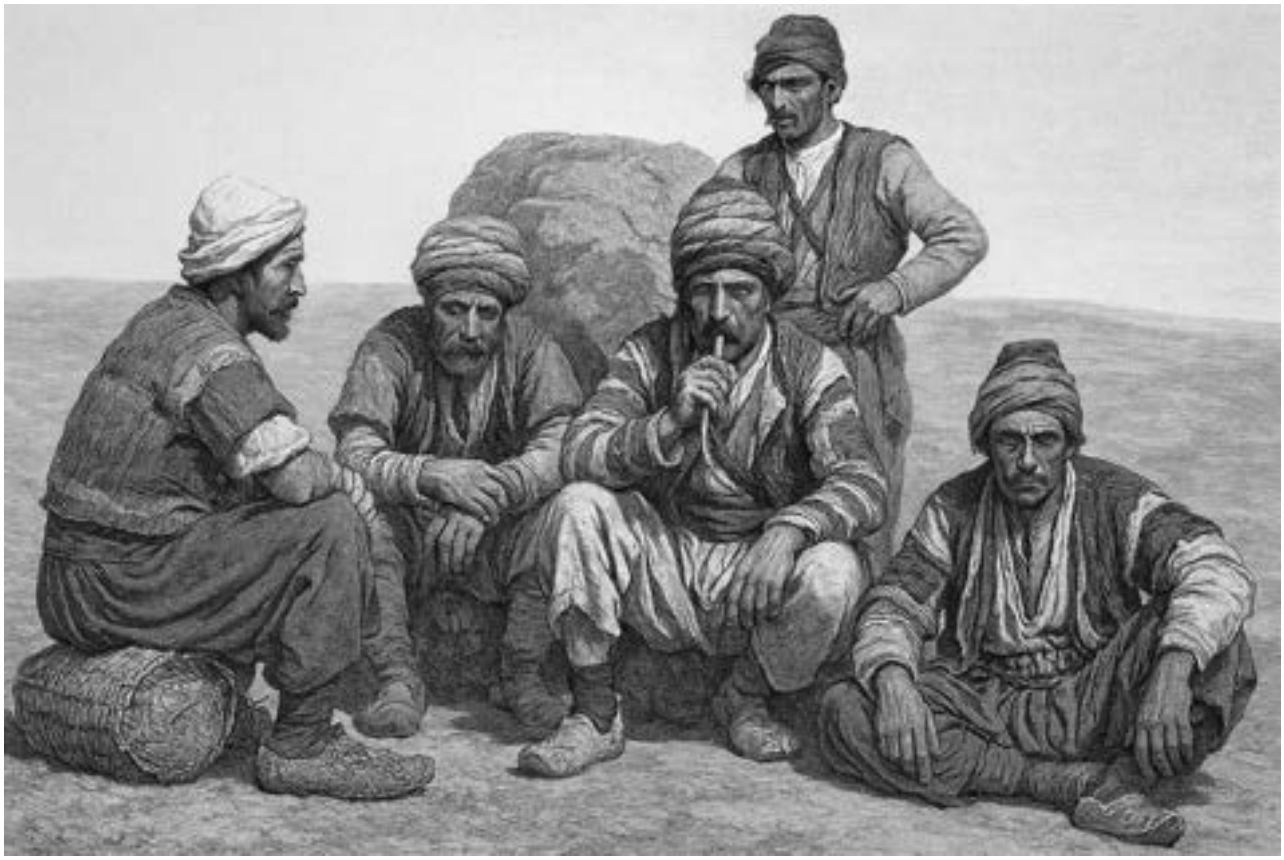
Cyaxares I's reign marked a golden age for the Median state, securing its place among the great powers of the ancient Near East. Upon his death, his son **Astyages** succeeded him in **585 BC**. Astyages was a devoted follower of **Zoroastrianism**, a religion that emphasized unity, truth, and peace. In line with these ideals, he promoted harmony within his diverse empire and placed trust in loyal allies, including a rising general named **Cyrus** (*Kūruš*), a member of the Persian nobility.

Though the **Median elite was predominantly of Kurdish origin**, the long-standing migration of **Tajik-Persian groups** into the region had begun to alter the demographics

and political balance. **Cyrus**, of **Tajik-Persian ethnicity**, sought to exploit these changes.

Seeking to secure his position within the royal house, **Cyrus proposed marriage to Astyages' daughter**, a union that was accepted and solidified familial bonds. However, in **550 BC**, Cyrus **betrayed** the Median court. Under the guise of a **royal feast**, he **poisoned the Median royal family**, effectively **annihilating the ruling lineage**. He then seized power and declared the establishment of the **Achaemenid Persian Empire**, marking the end of the **Median monarchy**.

This episode represents not only the **usurpation of Kurdish Median sovereignty**, but also a pivotal transformation in the region's history—the shift from a Kurdish-led empire to **Persian imperial rule**, which would dominate the political landscape of the region for centuries to come.



The Median people

1.27 – The Humbanid Dynasty in Elam (688–645 BC)

After the collapse of central Elamite authority in **688 BC**—due to internal uprisings and political fragmentation—a new ruling house emerged under the leadership of **Humban-Haltash I**. This resurgence led to the establishment of the **Humbanid Dynasty**, which governed for **43 years** with its capital at **Susa (Shush)**. The **official language** of this dynasty was **Kurdish**, reflecting the indigenous linguistic identity of the Elamite highlands.

The following table outlines the known rulers of the Humbanid Dynasty and the major events of their reigns:

Ruler's Name	**Reign Period**	**Key Events**
Humban-Haltash I	688–681 BC	Founded the dynasty; died of illness shortly after taking power.
Humban-Haltash II	681–674 BC	Continued the consolidation of Elamite rule.
Urtak	674–664 BC	Invaded Babylonia; was wounded in battle and died shortly after.
Tiuman (*Tepti-Humban-Inshushinak*)	664–645 BC	Opposed pro-Assyrian forces; killed by the Assyrians in the **Battle of Ulai**, along with his son **Tammaritu**. His death marked the end of Humbanid rule.

1.28 – The Neo-Elamite Dynasties (645–520 BC)

Although **Ashurbanipal of Assyria** had sacked Susa in **647 BC**, temporarily dismantling Elamite authority, the Elamites regained control within a decade and **re-established an independent monarchy**. This final phase of Elamite rule lasted **until 539 BC**, when the region was permanently annexed by **Cyrus the Great** and incorporated into the

Achaemenid Persian Empire, bringing an end to Elamite sovereignty after centuries of resistance.

The Neo-Elamite monarchs of this era ruled from **Susa**, occasionally sharing power with regional centers such as **Anshan (modern Shiraz)**. The period was marked by **shifting alliances**, **Assyrian pressure**, and **internal power struggles**, yet it also demonstrated the resilience of the Elamite (Kurdish) state.

Monarchs of the Neo-Elamite Period (645–520 BC)

Ruler	Reign Period	Capital	Key Events
Tammaritu II	652–649 BC	Susa	Participated in Babylon's war against Assyria; deposed by his general **Indabibi** and fled to Assyria.
Indabibi	649 BC	Susa	General who seized power; initially defied Assyria but later sued for peace; short and fragile reign.
Ummanalda	645–635 BC	Susa	Supported by Susa's nobility; overthrew Indabibi.
Shutur-Nahhunte	635–610 BC	Susa	Son of Ummanalda; maintained diplomatic ties with Babylon; recovered sacred Elamite statues looted by Assyrians.
Humban-Kitin	690–598 BC *(disputed)*	Susa	Maintained dynastic rule; may have ruled concurrently with others.
Hallutash-Inshushinak II	598–583 BC	Susa	Mentioned in Babylonian chronicles; continued dynastic traditions.
Humban-Shuturuk	Early 6th century BC	Susa	Upheld the dynasty's authority during a turbulent period.

Ruler	Reign Period	Capital	Key Events
Ummanunu	Mid-6th century BC	Susa	Referenced in Assyrian archives as a powerful regional ruler.
Bahuri	Mid-6th century BC	Susa	Name appears in Mesopotamian cuneiform sources.
Shilhak-Inshushinak II	Mid-6th century BC	Susa	Recognized as royalty in Babylonian inscriptions.
Atta-Hamiti-Inshushinak	Early 6th century BC	Susa / Anshan	Final prominent ruler of the dynasty; his reign marks the beginning of Elamite decline.
Tepti-Humban-Inshushinak II	550–539 BC	Susa	Attempted to resist Persian conquest; killed in battle by **Cyrus the Great**.
Aššina	532 BC	Elamite Highlands	Rebelled against Persian rule; defeated and **impaled** in Susa by Persian forces. His death marked the final end of Elamite independence.

Elamite Kurdish Identity and Geography

The Elamite polity encompassed a vast territory that today corresponds to:

- **Ilam**
- **Luristan**
- **Khuzestan** *(formerly Khorestan)*
- **Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad** *(formerly Kewegla)*
- **Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari** *(formerly Bakhtyari)*
- **Anshan (Shiraz)**
- **Reyshahr (Bushehr)**
- **Ecbatana (Hamadan)**
- **Markazi Province** *(Kurdish Rojhalat)*

- **Kirmashan**

A digital illustration of the Kurds of Elam (Lur, Elamite, Hurrian, Bakhtiari).

The Elamite Kingdom once ruled over the regions known today as Ilam, Luristan, Khuzestan (originally Khori-stan), Kiwagela (Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad), Bakhtiari (Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari), Anshan (Shiraz), Reyshar (Bushehr), Ekbatana (Hamadan), Rojhelat (Markazi Province), and Kermashan (Kermanshah).

The peoples of these regions were entirely Kurdish-speaking before their language was forcibly assimilated. Today, many of them have become Persianised without being aware that they descend from the Kurdish nation. For this reason, the DNA of these populations still reflects their Kurdish origins.

1.29 – The Achaemenid Persian Empire (550–330 BC)

The **Achaemenid Empire** was established in **550 BC** following the conquest of the **Median Empire** by **Cyrus the Great**. Upon his victory, Cyrus proclaimed that the Median royal family belonged to **Anshan** (an ancient Persian state), thereby asserting his authority and unifying the former Median and Persian realms under a new imperial structure. This marked the official beginning of what would become one of the largest and most powerful empires in antiquity.

In **539 BC**, Cyrus led a successful campaign against **Babylon**, toppling the Neo-Babylonian Empire and incorporating its vast territories into his growing empire. With this conquest, the **Achaemenid Empire** emerged as the dominant geopolitical force in the ancient Near East. Political and military control shifted decisively into the hands of the **Persian nobility**.

In **530 BC**, Cyrus was killed in battle during a campaign against the **Massagetae**, a Central Asian tribal confederation likely of **Turkic origin**. He was succeeded by his son, **Cambyses II**, who continued his father's expansionist policies. Cambyses conquered **Egypt**, bringing the ancient land of the Pharaohs under Persian control. However, he died in **522 BC**, reportedly from an infected wound sustained during his campaign.

Shortly after Cambyses' death, his brother **Bardiya** claimed the throne but was assassinated within months by **Darius I**, who then seized power and initiated major administrative, military, and legal reforms. Darius reorganized the empire into provinces (**satrapies**), built an extensive road network, and formed a well-trained standing army. His reign (522–486 BC) marked the height of Achaemenid power and territorial organization.

Upon Darius's death, his son **Xerxes I** ascended the throne in **486 BC**. Xerxes led military campaigns against **Greece**, including the famous battles of **Thermopylae** and **Salamis**. In **465 BC**, he was assassinated in a palace coup led by a commander named **Artabanus**. Power passed to **Artaxerxes I**, Xerxes's son, who maintained relative stability during his reign.

Following Artaxerxes I, the throne passed through a period of turmoil. His son **Xerxes II** ruled briefly before being murdered by his half-brother **Sogdianus**, who was in turn overthrown by **Darius II** in **423 BC**. Darius II's reign witnessed declining central authority and the loss of **Egypt** from imperial control.

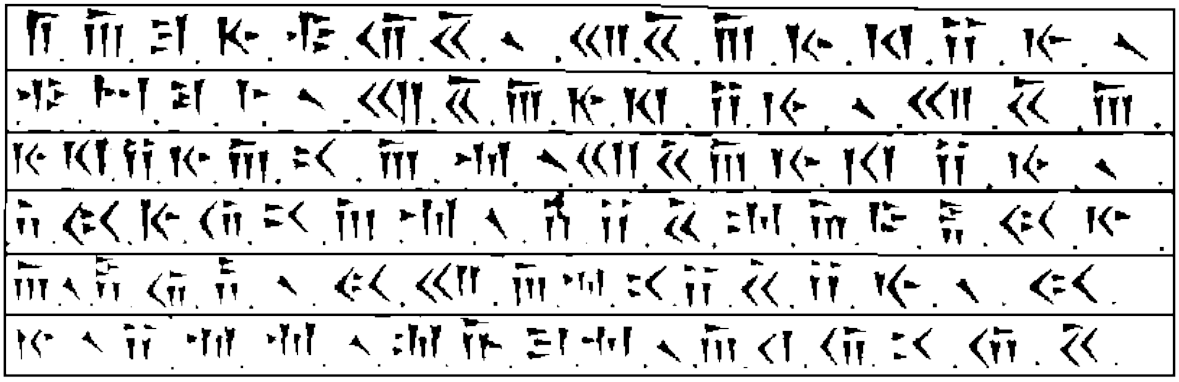
In **404 BC**, **Artaxerxes II**, son of Darius II, took the throne. He faced internal rebellion from his younger brother **Cyrus the Younger**, who was ultimately defeated and killed. His successor, **Artaxerxes III**, assumed power in **358 BC** and temporarily restored Persian rule over Egypt.

However, in **336 BC**, Artaxerxes III was poisoned by his close associates. He was succeeded by **Darius III**, under whose reign the empire faced the conquests of **Alexander the Great**. After a series of defeats, Darius III was assassinated by his general **Bessus** during a retreat in **330 BC**, marking the formal end of the Achaemenid Empire. Alexander then absorbed the vast Achaemenid domains into his expanding Macedonian empire, ruling until his own death in **323 BC**.

Map of the Achaemenid Empire in 525 BC

A prominent artifact from this period is the **Old Persian inscription at Naqsh-e Rustam**, dated to around **500 BC**, attributed to Darius the Great. The inscription, written in **Old Persian cuneiform (Pahlavi script)**, proclaims:

"I am Darius, the Great King, King of Kings, King of all peoples, ruler of this vast land. I am the son of Hystaspes, of the Achaemenid dynasty, a Persian, an Aryan, of pure Aryan lineage. I rule over Media, Elam, Babylon, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, Lydia, Ionia, Scythia, Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Zaranka, Aria (Herat), Bactria (Balkh), Sattagydia, and many other lands. Ahura Mazda aided me in bringing these lands under my rule. Let all who hear this know that my actions are just and true. Worship Ahura Mazda, and may He protect this country from enemies, famine, and lies."



This inscription reflects Darius's self-identification as a **Persian of Aryan descent**, a claim aligned with the **Indo-Iranian migrations** into the Iranian plateau between **1000–500 BC**. However, this **Aryan identity** refers to groups that **migrated into** ancient **Parthia** and **Media**, regions already inhabited by **indigenous peoples** such as the **Elamites**, **Kurds**, and other native civilizations of the **Zagros Mountains**.

The Kurdish Origin Distinction

Contrary to the Achaemenid's **Aryan lineage**, the **Kurds** are not of Aryan origin. They descend primarily from the **indigenous peoples of Media, Parthia, and Elam**, and have deep ethnic and cultural roots in **ancient Mesopotamian civilizations**, including the **Sumerians**, **Babylonians**, **Hurrians (Khurri)**, **Gutians**, and **Lullubi**.

The **Persian language**, originally a **Central Asian tongue**, underwent a significant transformation following the Aryan migration. Over centuries, it evolved under the influence of **Elamite (Proto-Kurdic)** dialects and later **Arabic**, resulting in the emergence of what is now known as **Modern Persian**. This language bears minimal resemblance to its **Old Pahlavi** predecessor and is considered by many scholars to be **a distinct language family**.

In contrast, the **Kurdish language** retains substantial continuity with **Elamite**, **Hurrian**, and **Lullubi** roots, affirming the unique ethno-linguistic identity.

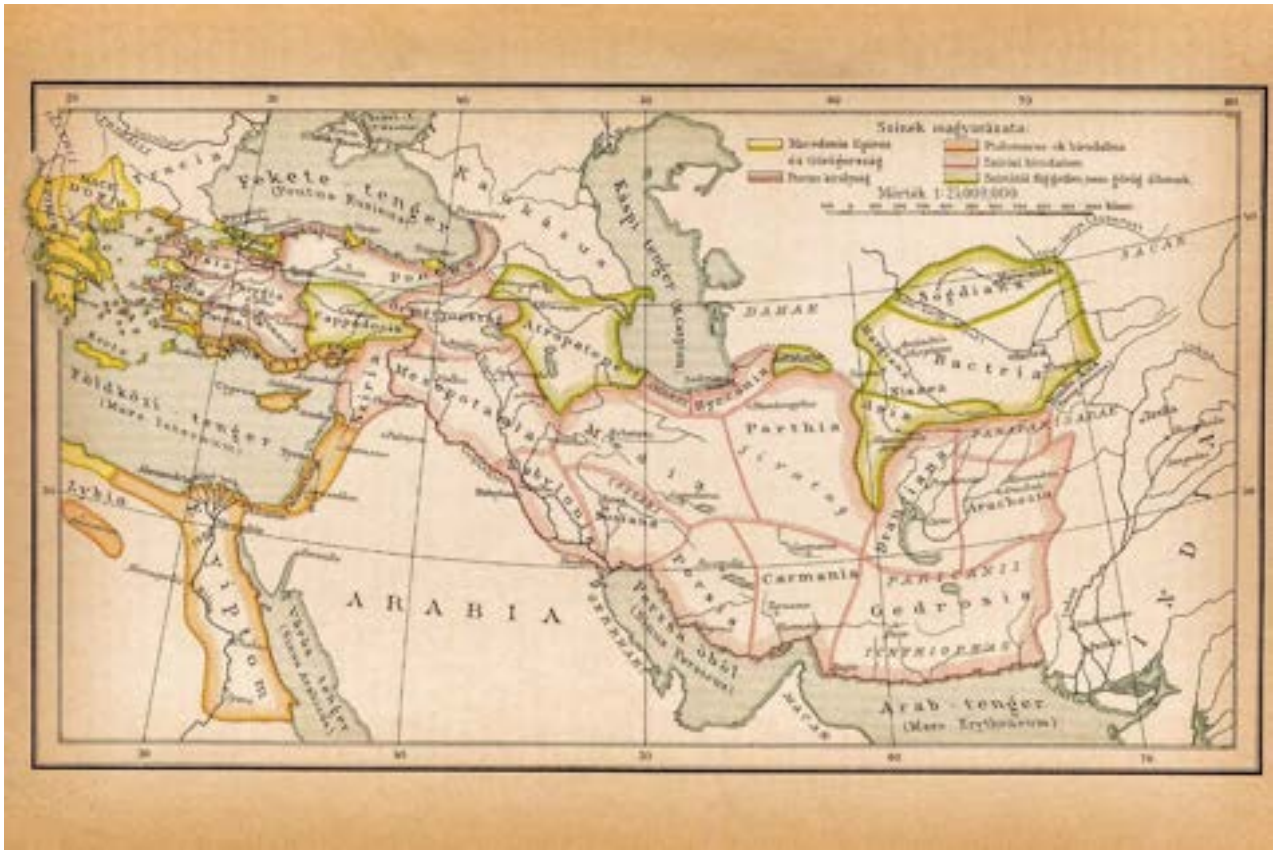
1.30 – The Rule of Atropatene Kurdistan (323 BC – 224 CE)

After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BC, **Atropates**, a prominent Median general who had served under **Darius III**, became the satrap (governor) of **Media** under **Alexander the Great** in 328 BC. Following Alexander's death in 323 BC and the subsequent fragmentation of his empire, Atropates declared independence and established an autonomous kingdom—**Atropatene**—in the heart of **eastern and southern Kurdistan**.

The **Kingdom of Atropatene** emerged as a strong regional power with its capital at **Ganzak** (modern-day **Duwawan** or **Miyandoab**). Over time, Atropatene expanded its territorial reach to encompass key cities across a broad swath of historical Kurdistan, including:

- **Lankaran**,
- **Aras**,
- **Kurdawa** (currently named **Azarshahr**),
- **Zangiyan** (currently named **Zanjan**),
- **Rebar** (currently named **Rasht**),
- **Ramswar** (currently named **Ramsar**),
- **Ardewel** (currently named **Ardabil**),
- **Wirme** (currently named **Urmia**),
- **Tawrez** (currently named **Tabriz**),
- **Maraqa** (currently named **Maragheh**),
- **Mukriyan**, (currently named Mahabad area)
- **Bilbas**, (currently named Piranshahir area)
- **Ardalan**, (currently named Kordistan)
- **Ecbatana** (modern-day **Hamadan**),
- **Malamir** (currently named **Malayer**),
- **Kermashan** (currently named **Kirmashan**).

These cities, now part of **modern-day Iran and Azerbaijan**, were historically Kurdish-inhabited and culturally linked to **Median** and **Elamite** heritage.



The Rule of Atropates in the First 200 Years

Atropatene: A Kurdish Authority in Eastern and Southern Kurdistan

The Atropatenian kingdom represents one of the earliest documented **Kurdish-led polities** following the disintegration of Alexander's empire. The **official language** of administration was **Median**—a Proto-Kurdish tongue—and the **state religion** was **Zoroastrianism**, inherited from the Median and Achaemenid traditions.

The kingdom lasted **over 550 years**, preserving a degree of **political independence**, **cultural continuity**, and **linguistic identity** within a region increasingly influenced by Hellenistic, Armenian, and later Parthian powers. Despite maintaining regional autonomy, Atropatene frequently navigated external pressures by forming alliances and vassalage arrangements with neighboring empires such as the **Seleucids**, **Armenians**, and **Parthians (Arsacids)**.

The Rule of Atropates in the Final 352 Years

The Fall of Atropatene and Sasanian Conquest

In **224 CE**, Atropatene came under attack by the newly rising **Sasanian Empire**, a **Kurdish-Elamite dynasty** based in **Ctesiphon** (near modern Baghdad). Under **Ardashir I**, the Sasanians defeated the Atropatenian kingdom after a bloody campaign that resulted in the **massacres**, **looting**, and **dismantling** of the existing Kurdish political structure.

While the Sasanians were themselves of **Elamite-Kurdish descent**, they centralized power in Ctesiphon and often clashed with other Kurdish factions to consolidate their imperial authority. Nevertheless, their rise marked the continuation of **Kurdish dynastic rule** across vast regions of Kurdistan until the **Arab conquest** in the **mid-7th century CE**.

Notable Kings of Atropatene

Ruler	Reign Period	Significant Events
Atropates	328 BC	Former general under Darius III. Founded the kingdom after Alexander's death; established Ganzak as the capital.
Artabazanes	Unknown	During the reign of **Antiochus III**, acknowledged **Seleucid suzerainty** while retaining internal autonomy.
Mithridates	Unknown	Formed marital alliances with the **Armenian royal family**, strengthening diplomatic ties.
Ariobarzanes I	65–56 BC	Maintained strategic alliances and peace with **Armenia**.
Artavasdes I	Unknown	Continued peaceful relations with **Armenian neighbors**.
Asinnalus	Unknown	Preserved political harmony with Armenia.
Ariobarzanes II	20 BC – 4 AD	Accompanied **Gaius Caesar** to Armenia; faced resistance; died in 4 AD.
Artavasdes II	Unknown	Son of Ariobarzanes II; details of his reign are scarce.
Artabanus	Unknown	From the **Parthian (Arsacid) dynasty**; maintained Kurdish control through dynastic integration.
Vonones	Unknown	Son of Artabanus; his reign marked the kingdom's final phase.
Pacorus	200–226 AD	Last ruler of Atropatene; overthrown by **Ardashir I**, founder of the **Sasanian Empire**.

1.31 – The Parthian (Arsacid) Kurdish Empire (247 BC – 224 AD)

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was one of the most significant imperial powers in the ancient Near East. It ruled from 247 BC to 224 AD, extending its influence over much of Kurdistan, Iran, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, and parts of the Middle East. The dynasty that led this empire, the Arsacids, is regarded as being of Kurdish origin.

Monarchs of the Parthian Empire

Name of Ruler	Reign Period	Notable Events
Arsaces I	247–211 BC	Founder of the Parthian Empire; led a revolt against Seleucid domination.
Arsaces II	211–185 BC	Consolidated rule and unified tribal and military structures.
Priapatius	188–170 BC	Maintained administrative stability.
Phraates I	170–165 BC	Expanded the empire into Hyrcania.
Mithridates I	165–132 BC	Conquered Media and Babylonia, expanding westward.
Phraates II	132–127 BC	Fought against the Sakas and Seleucids.
Artabanus I	127–124 BC	Killed in battle with the Yuezhi.
Mithridates II	124–88 BC	Oversaw the empire’s "Golden Era"; established diplomatic relations with Rome and China.
Orodes I	88–38 BC	Faced internal strife and Roman conflicts.
Orodes II	57–37 BC	Defeated Roman general Crassus in northern Kurdistan.

Phraates IV	37–2 BC	Strengthened rule and cut ties with Rome.
Vonones I	8–12 AD	Reign marked by instability.
Artabanus II	12–38 AD	Restored Arsacid rule and engaged in wars with Rome.
Vardanes I	38–50 AD	Governed during a turbulent period.
Vologases I	51–78 AD	Stabilized the empire amid continued Roman conflict.
Pacorus II	78–105 AD	Temporarily lost Mesopotamian territories.
Osroes I	109–129 AD	Reign coincided with Roman invasions; Trajan captured Ctesiphon.
Vologases III	129–191 AD	Faced internal divisions and civil war.
Hormizd-Artabanus IV	213–224 AD	Last ruler; defeated by Ardashir I, ending the Parthian Empire.

Administrative Centers and Language

Major cities and administrative hubs of the Parthian Empire included:

- **Nisa** (modern Turkmenistan): Early capital
- **Ctesiphon** (near Baghdad): Central administrative capital
- **Ecbatana** (modern Hamadan)
- **Seleucia** (north of Baghdad)
- **Ragha** (modern Rey, south of Tehran)

The official administrative language was **Median**, inscribed using the **Aramaic script**.

Religion

The Parthians practiced **Zoroastrianism**, which was central to both religious and legal traditions. Temples and rituals played a prominent role in public and royal life.

Decline and Succession

Despite their powerful legacy, the Arsacid dynasty suffered from internal fragmentation and civil wars. The weakening of central authority paved the way for Ardashir I, founder of the Sasanian Empire, to rise in rebellion. In 224 AD, Ardashir defeated Hormizd-Artabanus IV, marking the end of the Parthian Kurdish Empire and the beginning of the **Sasanian Kurdish dynasty**.

The map of Parthian Empire

The Kingdom of Commagene

The **Kingdom of Commagene**, centered at Mount Nemrut, maintained semi-independent status under Parthian influence. Its rulers, including **Antiochus I Theos (69–34 BC)**, emphasized divine kingship and cultural synthesis. The monumental statues of Mount Nemrut reflect a blend of **Greek and Kurdish traditions**, highlighting the ethnic makeup of the region, predominantly Kurdish.

Historical Recognition and Erasure

The Parthian Empire was not only a military and political force but also a cultural bridge between East and West. Yet, in many modern narratives, the Kurdish identity of the Arsacid dynasty and neighboring states like Commagene has been downplayed or erased.

Recognizing the **Kurdish heritage** embedded within the Parthian legacy is essential to restoring historical accuracy and affirming the deep cultural roots of the Kurdish people in the ancient Near East.

1.32 – The Monarchy of Commagene (163 BC – 17 AD)

The Kingdom of Commagene was located in Northern Kurdistan and ruled for 180 years between the Parthian and Roman Empires. Although it maintained friendly relations with both empires, it was often caught in the tensions between them. The monarchs of this kingdom were of Greek origin, but the local rulers were predominantly Kurdish, as the inhabitants of the region were largely of Kurdish ethnicity.

The capital of the Commagene Kingdom was the city of Samosata, which now lies submerged beneath the Atatürk Dam, near the city of Adiyaman in Northern Kurdistan. In other words, Turkey has submerged this historically Kurdish city under water.

Below is a list of the known monarchs of Commagene, along with the dates of their reigns and significant events that occurred during their rule:

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period**	**Historical Events**
Ptolemaeus of Commagene	163–130 BC	Ruled independently. Established friendly relations with the Kurdish Parthian Empire and cooperated with the Roman Seleucid Empire.

Sames II Theosebes Dikaios	130–109 BC	Pursued internal peace and maintained amicable relations with neighboring regions.
Mithridates I Callinicus	109–70 BC	Married into an Armenian noble family. Succeeded in diplomacy and died a natural death.
Antiochus I Theos	70–38 BC	Expanded the territory of Commagene. Famous for constructing the statues atop Mount Nemrut. Identified himself as a Kurd.
Mithridates II	38–20 BC	Due to pressure from the Roman Empire, his power weakened. He died a natural death.
Antiochus II	29–20 BC	Executed by the Romans on charges of conspiracy.
Mithridates III	20–12 BC	Died a natural death.
Antiochus III	12 BC – 17 AD	After his death, the Kingdom of Commagene was annexed by the Roman Empire, bringing an end to the kingdom.

A map of the Kingdom of Commagene and its neighboring states during that era.

The Statues of Mount Nemrut

The Statues of Mount Nemrut and the Cultural Legacy of Commagene

The statues created during this kingdom's reign, located on Mount Nemrut, still remain standing to this day. Although many of them were damaged during the 19th and 20th centuries by the authorities of the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey—and several were looted or sold to museums in other parts of the world—they continue to be a remarkable and captivating sight today.

The Kingdom of Commagene and Its Kurdish Roots

The Kingdom of Commagene—centered around Mount Nemrut—was a semi-independent monarchy, yet it maintained complex ties with the Parthian Empire. The influence of the Parthians was significant across many smaller neighboring states, including Commagene. The relationship between the Parthian Empire and the Kingdom of Commagene is well-documented, with historical evidence showing that many of Commagene's inhabitants were Kurds.

Antiochus I, king of Commagene, ruled from 69 BC to 34 BC. The construction of the monumental statues on Mount Nemrut was part of his royal ambition to legitimize his divine monarchy and leave behind a strong cultural legacy. These efforts reflected both

Greek (Hellenistic) and Kurdish cultural elements, as the people of the region were predominantly Kurdish.

Cultural and Historical Significance

The Kurdish people possess a deep-rooted historical and cultural heritage in the regions of Anatolia and Mesopotamia, areas that hosted a variety of kingdoms and empires. The Kingdom of Commagene, with its strong Kurdish lineage, holds an important place in Kurdish identity, and for that reason, it must be recognized as part of the cultural and historical continuity of the Kurdish people.

The statues of Nemrut and the royal complex surrounding Mount Nemrut are not only significant in terms of Greek and Hellenistic influence but are also of immense value within the Kurdish cultural and historical context.

Modern Erasure and Historical Neglect

The neglect or erasure of Kurdish identity in historical narratives—particularly in reference to places like Mount Nemrut—reflects broader patterns of cultural and political marginalization. In modern times, this has often manifested in the distortion, suppression, or deletion of Kurdish identity.

Recognizing and preserving the Kurdish role in such ancient legacies is vital, especially as these cultural monuments are reinterpreted or politically reframed in ways that often ignore or diminish the Kurdish contribution.

1.33 – The Kingdom of Adiabene (145 BC – 116 AD)

The **Kingdom of Adiabene** was an ancient **Kurdish polity** that lasted for approximately **261 years**, ruling over key regions of present-day **Hawler (Erbil), Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah**, and **Hakkari**. Founded in **145 BC**, Adiabene emerged in the power vacuum that followed the collapse of the Seleucid Empire and played a prominent role in the geopolitics of northern Mesopotamia.

Initially, the rulers of Adiabene were **Zoroastrian** and bore **Kurdish or Mesopotamian names**. However, in a pivotal development at the start of the 1st century AD, the royal family—most notably **Queen Helena** and her sons—**converted to Judaism**, a transformation that elevated Adiabene's status in the history of the Jewish people.

Queen Helena and the Jewish Connection

Queen **Helena of Adiabene** became one of the most celebrated figures of her time due to her **philanthropic contributions** to the city of **Jerusalem**. Historical records, including those of **Josephus**, recount how she traveled to Jerusalem during a famine and **donated large quantities of gold and food** to support the poor. She also **constructed a palace and a tomb** in Jerusalem, symbols of her enduring legacy. As a result, Adiabene developed strong cultural and religious ties with the Jewish population of Judea, especially during the early years of Roman occupation.

Geopolitical Significance and Decline

The capital of Adiabene was **Arbela** (modern **Hawler (Erbil)**), one of the **oldest continuously inhabited cities** in the world and a longstanding center of Kurdish civilization.

During the 2nd century AD, Adiabene was drawn into the ongoing conflict between the **Roman Empire** and the **Parthian Empire**. The kingdom attempted to maintain its independence through shifting alliances, but in **116 AD**, during the eastern campaigns of **Emperor Trajan**, Adiabene was **annexed** and made a **Roman province**. Though Roman control was short-lived, the kingdom's sovereignty was never restored.

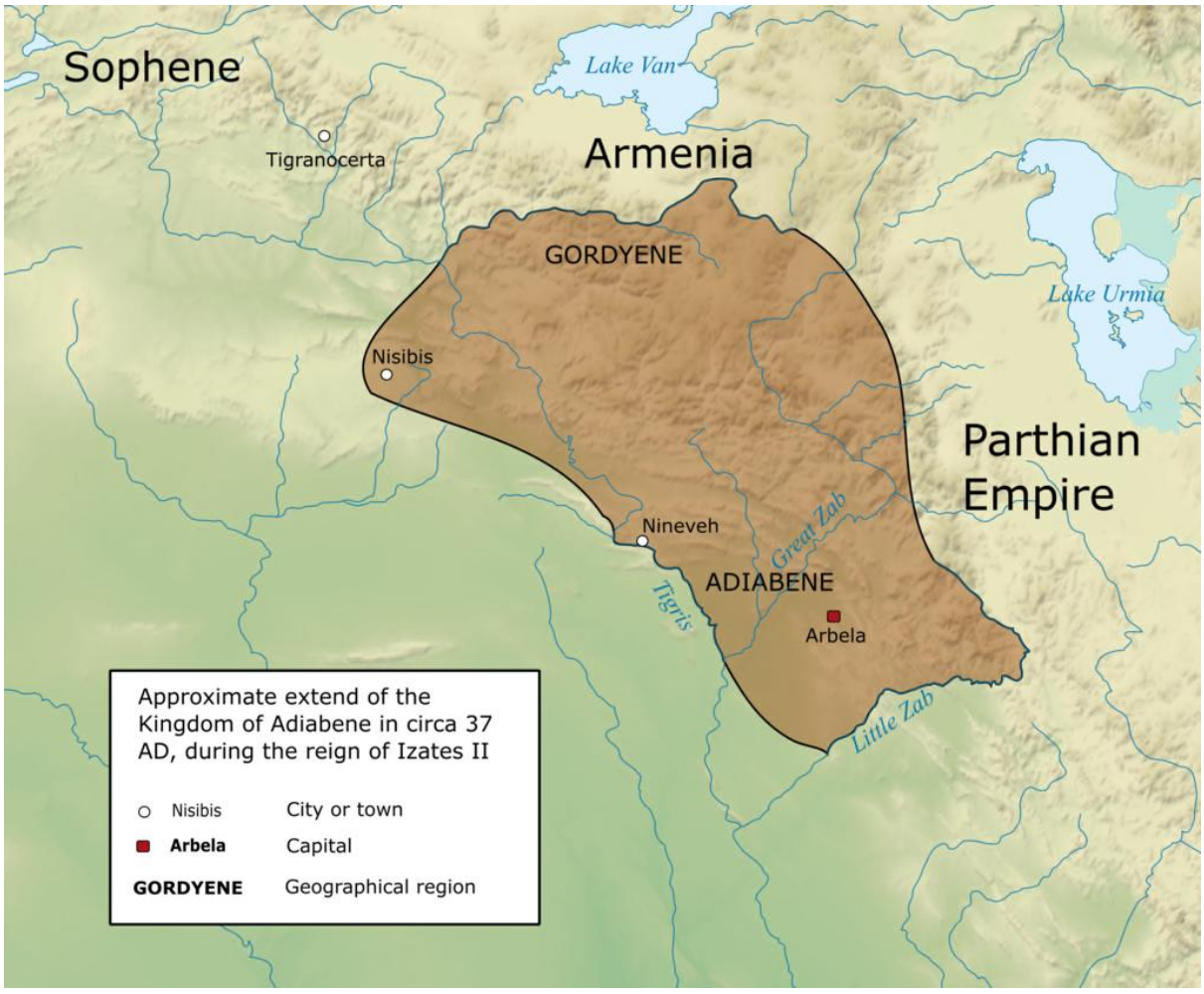
In **224 AD**, the newly founded **Sasanian Empire** under **Ardashir I** launched an invasion of Adiabene, leading to its **complete absorption** into the Sasanian realm. This marked the **end of the independent Kurdish kingdom**, although its cultural and historical legacy persisted.

An engraved image of the first king of Adiabene, depicted on the currency of the kingdom.

Known Monarchs of Adiabene

Name of Ruler	Reign Period	Key Events
Abdissares	145–120 BC	Founded the Adiabene dynasty following the decline of the Seleucid Empire.
Unnamed King	120–70 BC	Allied with **Tigranes the Great** of Armenia during the **Tigranocerta War** (69 BC) against Rome.
Artaxares	50–30 BC	Deposed by Parthian King **Phraates IV**; later sought refuge under **Augustus** in Rome.
Izates I	30 BC – 5 AD	Father of **Monobazus I** and **Queen Helena**; maintained Adiabene's semi-autonomous status.
Monobazus I & Helena	5 – 30 AD	Strengthened ties with Judea; oversaw the conversion of the royal family to Judaism.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period	Key Events
Izates II	30 – 55 AD	Fully embraced Judaism; supported Parthian King **Artabanus II** and practiced religious tolerance.
Monobazus II	55 – 70 AD	Continued pro-Jewish policies; supported the **Jewish revolt** against Roman rule (66–70 AD).
Meharaspes (Meparsaspes)	90 – 116 AD	The last king of Adiabene; defeated by **Emperor Trajan** and the kingdom was annexed.



The Kingdom of Adiabene reached its peak around the year 37 AD, during the reign of King Izates II.

1.34 – The Rule of the Kingdom of Osroene (132 BC – 244 AD)

The Kingdom of Osroene was a Syriac-Kurdish dominion that ruled parts of northern and western Kurdistan for 376 years, from 132 BC to 244 AD. Its capital was the city of Edessa, known today as Riha (Urfa) in northern Kurdistan. Positioned at the crossroads of the Roman, Parthian, and later Sassanid empires, Osroene played a pivotal role as a cultural and political buffer zone. Initially, sun worship was the dominant faith, but over time, the kingdom became one of the earliest centers of Christianity. The official administrative language was Khurian (Kurdish).

Below is a list of Osroene's known kings, their reign periods, and notable events:

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period**	**Key Events**
Aryu	132–127 BC	Died of natural causes.
Abgar I	127–120 BC	Died of natural causes.
Abgar II	120–100 BC	Died of natural causes.
Abgar III	100–68 BC	Died of natural causes.
Abgar IV	68–53 BC	Died of natural causes.
Abgar V "Ukkama the Black"	4 BC – 50 AD	Allegedly corresponded with Jesus. Prominent in Christian history.
Manu VI	50–57 AD	Fate unknown.
Abgar VI	57–71 AD	Died of natural causes.
Manu VII	71–91 AD	Died of natural causes.
Abgar VII	91–109 AD	Killed in conflict with the Romans.
Yalur	109–116 AD	Abolished Syriac rule; established Kurdish rule.

Parthamaspates	116–118 AD	Syriac rule restored with Roman support.
Manu VIII	118–123 AD	Died of natural causes.
Abgar VIII	167–177 AD	Converted to Christianity; Edessa became the first officially Christian city.
Abgar IX	177–212 AD	Assassinated by Roman Emperor Caracalla.
Abgar X	212–214 AD	Short reign; kingdom annexed into the Roman Empire.

1.35 – The Kurdish Rule of Corduene (90 BC – 69 AD)

Historically known as Corduene, Gordyene, or Carduchi, this Kurdish kingdom governed territories in both northern and southern Kurdistan for 159 years, from 90 BC to 69 AD. Its power base was centered in areas that correspond to the modern-day provinces of Diyarbakir, Şırnak, and Duhok.

Prominent Rulers of Corduene:

- **Zarbienus** (c. 90 BC): Allied with Rome (Lucullus) against the Armenian King Tigranes. He was later killed by Tigranes for perceived betrayal.
- **Manisarus (Manisari)** (early 1st century AD): Navigated tensions between Rome and Parthia to maintain Corduene's autonomy. Ultimately captured by the Romans.

Throughout its existence, Corduene endured repeated invasions and plundering by the Kingdom of Armenia, the Parthian Empire, and the Roman Empire, leading to widespread destruction and massacres.

By the 1st century AD, Corduene had been annexed by Rome, later absorbed into the Byzantine Empire, and eventually became part of the Islamic Caliphate. Ultimately, it was incorporated into the Kurdish territories under Ottoman rule.

The kingdom's capital was Carrhae (modern-day Harran), situated just south of Riha (Urfa) in northern Kurdistan.

The traditional houses in Harran, remnants from the Corduene era, still stand today. While they generate tourism revenue for Turkish authorities, no efforts have been made to preserve them as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Section Two

2- The History of the Kurdish People and Their Region in the Common Era

The Kurdish people are widely recognized as the direct cultural and ethnic descendants of the ancient Medes. Between the 9th and 6th centuries BC, the Medes achieved what many neighboring civilizations could not—they united their lands under a centralized monarchy, creating a powerful empire that endured for approximately three centuries. Over the centuries that followed, linguistic and cultural transformations gradually reshaped the Median identity, with historical sources indicating a natural evolution in which the name *Mede* transitioned into the name *Kurd*.

To fully understand the Kurdish historical journey in the Common Era, it is necessary to examine the political, cultural, and territorial dynamics that unfolded after the fall of the Median Empire. This section provides a chronological and analytical study of the major powers, states, and dynasties that influenced—and were influenced by—the Kurdish people during this period.

Particular attention will be given to both Kurdish-led polities and foreign empires that ruled over Kurdish lands, including:

- The **Kurdish Sasanian dynasties**, who preserved elements of Median heritage within a Persian imperial framework.
- The **Arab Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates**, whose expansion into Kurdistan brought sweeping religious, political, and linguistic changes.
- The **Persian Samanids** and **Turkic Ghaznavids**, whose policies toward Kurdish regions alternated between military campaigns and strategic alliances.
- The **Turkic Seljuks** and **Khwarazmians**, whose imperial ambitions reshaped the political geography of the Middle East, including Kurdish territories.
- The **Kurdish principalities and dynasties** such as the Marwanids, Shankirids, Fathalids, Khurshadis, Ayyubids, and Shaddadids, each leaving a distinct mark on the governance, culture, and defense of Kurdish lands.

- The **Mongol invasions**, which introduced an era of destruction and restructuring that altered the balance of power across the region.

This section will explore each of these historical actors in detail—tracing their origins, ascent to power, systems of governance, military strategies, and eventual decline—while consistently framing these narratives through the Kurdish historical perspective. By doing so, it seeks to illuminate how each chapter of the Common Era contributed to shaping Kurdish identity, resilience, and political aspirations.

The coinage from the reign of Khosrow II of the Sasanian Empire (591–628 AD), which was minted in Zêw.

2.1 – The Kurdish Sasanian Imperial Dynasty (244–651 AD)

The Sasanian Empire, which reigned from 244 to 651 AD, was founded by a dynasty with deep Kurdish roots—the illustrious **House of Sasan**. Emerging in opposition to the Parthian Empire—itself established by a Kurdish dynasty—the Sasanians consolidated power over a vast realm stretching from Mesopotamia to the Iranian Plateau. The people of this empire, particularly in its western territories, were predominantly of

Kurdish origin, and the dynasty's patriarch, **Sasan**, is widely believed to have hailed from Kurdistan.

Historical accounts recount that a prophecy foretold the future rule of Sasan's descendants over the land of Media. Inspired by this vision, Sasan journeyed eastward into the Parthian domains to expand his knowledge, gain experience, and prepare himself for the fulfillment of this destiny.

Genealogical traditions further strengthen the Kurdish lineage of the House of Sasan. The dynasty traced its ancestry to **Bahman**, son of *Esfandiyar* and grandson of the Kayanian king *Goshtasp*. Sasan himself belonged to the **Shankira (Shwankara)** tribal confederation, while his wife, Papak, descended from the Kurdish **Bazrangi** lineage. Together, these familial ties point convincingly to the Kurdish heritage of **Ardashir I**, the empire's founder.

Contemporary sources provide explicit testimony to this origin. The Parthian king **Hormizd-Artabanus IV**, in a documented exchange recorded by historians al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir, openly referred to Ardashir I as a Kurd, stating:

"You, O Kurdish man who grew up in a Kurdish tent—who allowed you to place a crown upon your head?"

This remark, intended as an insult, serves today as a powerful historical acknowledgment of Ardashir's Kurdish ethnicity.

Further corroboration comes from **Bahrām Chopan**, the Sasanian governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan during the reign of Khosrow II. In a moment of derision, he called the ruler "the son of a weaver woman who was raised in a Kurdish dwelling." Although meant to belittle, such statements from political rivals of the time stand as important contemporary evidence confirming the Kurdish identity of the Sasanian dynasty.

In this way, the rise of the Sasanians was not merely the ascent of another imperial power—it was the continuation of a Kurdish imperial legacy, rooted in Median heritage and carried forward through centuries of resilience and ambition.

The Sasanian Empire in 620 AD: Extent, Kurdish Legacy, and Linguistic Evidence

The Extent and Kurdish Character of the Sasanian Empire (244–651 AD)

By the early 7th century AD—around 620—the Sasanian Empire stood at the height of its territorial expansion. Its dominion encompassed present-day India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Balochistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, large parts of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. This vast expanse was ruled by a dynasty of Kurdish origin, and the Kurdish people of the time wielded considerable political influence—an ironic contrast to their current statelessness and loss of sovereignty.

Many urban centers founded under the Sasanians bore distinctly Kurdish names, reflecting the ethnolinguistic identity of their founders. The imperial administrative capital included a district called **Kurdabad**, literally “the place of the Kurds,” indicating its foundation as a Kurdish settlement. Ardashir I established **Bōb Ardashir** near present-day Mosul specifically for Kurdish inhabitants. Other cities, such as **Malazkurd**

and **Kawakurd**, were founded by Sasanian rulers like Kava and Anushirvan, further underlining the Kurdish imprint on imperial geography. Following the Arab Muslim conquests, many of these cities were destroyed, renamed, or repopulated to erase their Kurdish character.

Even the royal name **Khosrow** reveals Kurdish linguistic origins. Derived from *khas* ("noble" or "good") and *raw* ("appearance" or "nature"), the name was originally *Khasraw*. Over time, it evolved into *Khosrow* (Persian) or *Khusrau* (Arabicized Persian), but its original Kurdish etymology remains clear—challenging later Persian claims to exclusive ownership of the name.

Numerous Sasanian-era toponyms and personal names display similar Kurdish roots. For example:

- **Yazdkurd**: from *Yazd* and *Kurd*
- **Ardashir**: from *ard* ("brave" or "holy") and *shir* ("lion") in Kurdish
- **Pîroz**: still used today in Kurdish meaning "blessed" or "victorious."

The name **Hormizd** (or Ahura Mazda) also has a deep historical trajectory, linked to the ancient Sumerian deity *Hormes*, later incorporated into Zoroastrian theology. These etymologies reinforce the Kurdish cultural, linguistic, and mythological presence within the Sasanian imperial framework.

When the Arab Muslim armies advanced into the region in the 7th century, the fiercest resistance often came from Kurdish fortresses and cities such as **Sharazur**, **Mosul**, **Hulwan**, **Nahavand**, and **Jalawla**. This determined defense further supports the view—shared even by contemporaries—that the Sasanians were a dynasty rooted in Kurdish identity.

The imperial banner of the Sasanians, the **Kaviani Banner**, was named after *Kawa the Blacksmith* (*Kawa Asingeri*), a legendary Kurdish national hero. This symbolic choice demonstrates the enduring centrality of Kurdish identity in the empire's political culture.

Taken together—contemporary references, place names, royal titles, linguistic evidence, and patterns of resistance—these facts form a compelling case that the Sasanian dynasty was of Kurdish origin. At its zenith, the empire ruled over vast territories where an estimated 90% of the population was ethnically Kurdish, including Kurdistan, Iran, Mesopotamia, Atropatene (modern Azerbaijan), Turkmenistan, and parts of Central Asia.

The capital, **Ctesiphon** (south of present-day Baghdad), stood as the heart of the empire for over four centuries. Its Kurdish character was reflected in court language and administration. After its fall to the Arab Muslim forces, the conquerors built **al-Mada'in** on its ruins. Today, the great arch of **Taq-i-Kisra** remains a testament to the grandeur of that era. The Sasanian collapse—driven by internal strife, betrayal, and fratricidal power struggles—echoes recurring patterns in Kurdish history. *(See Appendix 2*).

Notable Sasanian Rulers

Ruler	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Fate**
Ardashir I	224–242	Died of natural causes
Shapur I	242–270	Died of natural causes
Hormizd I	270–271	Died of natural causes
Bahram I	271–274	Died of natural causes
Bahram II	274–293	Died of natural causes
Bahram III	293	Killed by Narseh
Narseh	293–302	Died of natural causes
Hormizd II	302–309	Killed by one of his own men
Shapur II	309–379	Died of natural causes
Ardashir II	379–383	Poisoned

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Fate
Shapur III	383–388	Killed by one of his own men
Bahram IV	388–399	Killed by his own soldiers
Yazdegerd I	399–420	Poisoned by close associates
Bahram V	420–438	Died during a hunting accident
Yazdegerd II	438–457	Died of natural causes
Hormizd III	457–459	Killed by his brother Peroz
Peroz I	459–484	Killed in battle against the Hephthalites near Samarkand
Balash	484–488	Blinded and deposed by courtiers
Kavad I	488–496	Imprisoned and removed by Jamasp
Jamasp	496–498	Dethroned by Kavad I
Kavad I (restored)	498–531	Died of natural causes
Khosrow I (Anushirvan)	531–579	Died of natural causes
Hormizd IV	579–590	Imprisoned and deposed by courtiers
Khosrow II (Parviz)	590–628	Executed by his son Kavad II after defending against Quraysh Arabs
Kavad II	628	Died of plague
Ardashir III	628–630	Killed by Shahrbaraz
Shahrbaraz	630	Killed by courtiers
Boran	630–631	Killed by courtiers
Shapur V	631	Killed by courtiers
Azarmidokht	631	Killed by courtiers

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Fate
Hormizd VI	631–632	Killed by courtiers
Yazdegerd III	632–651	Killed through betrayal after fleeing Rashidun invasions; moved capitals from Ctesiphon to Hulwan, Istakhr, and finally Merv

The Battle Between the Kurdish Sasanians and the Arab Forces Led by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas in 636 AD

The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah (636 AD) — A Decisive Turning Point

In 636 AD, the Kurdish-led Sasanian forces confronted the advancing Arab Muslim armies in one of the most consequential engagements of Late Antiquity—the **Battle of al-Qadisiyyah**. Commanded by Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās on behalf of the Rashidun

Caliphate, the invading forces sought to break the last defensive line protecting the Sasanian heartlands.

This battle was not an isolated event, but part of a larger series of fierce and protracted confrontations between the Sasanian Empire and the rapidly expanding Islamic Caliphate. The Sasanian army—comprising significant Kurdish contingents, including elements of the imperial guard and many of its senior commanders—fought with the same determination that had characterized Kurdish resistance throughout history.

Despite their valor, the Sasanians suffered a devastating defeat. The loss at al-Qadisiyyah shattered the defensive cohesion of the empire, opening the way for Arab-Muslim advances deep into Mesopotamia. In the aftermath, key urban centers fell in quick succession, and the political authority of the Kurdish-rooted Sasanian dynasty began to unravel.

This encounter marked far more than a military loss—it was a civilizational turning point. It signaled the beginning of the end for Sasanian sovereignty in Mesopotamia and heralded the rise of Arab-Muslim rule across territories that had, for centuries, formed the core of Kurdish political and cultural influence. From this point forward, the balance of power in the region shifted irrevocably, setting in motion profound demographic, linguistic, and cultural transformations that would reshape the Middle East for centuries to come.

2.2 – The Arrival of the Arab Nation in Kurdistan (610–632 AD)

Between 610 and 632 AD, **Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hashim**, the Prophet of Islam, initiated the formation of a religious-political authority that combined proselytizing Islam with the consolidation of Arab cultural and political dominance. In 622 AD, he established his base of power in **Medina**, and by 630 AD, declared **Mecca** the capital of his rule.

Following Muhammad's death in 632 AD, his closest companions instituted a system of leadership known as the **Rashidun Caliphate** (632–661 AD), governed exclusively by members of the Arab nation. This caliphate expanded rapidly through a combination of **religious jihad, continuous warfare, mass killings, and military conquest**, bringing large parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and western Asia under Arab-Muslim rule, with Medina serving as the administrative capital.

Abu Bakr (632–634 AD), the first caliph, confined his campaigns largely to the Arabian Peninsula. The second caliph, **Umar ibn al-Khattab** (634–644 AD), initiated major territorial expansions, conquering **Kurdistan, Iran, and Egypt**. At that time, the most formidable state in the known world was the **Kurdish Sasanian Empire**, which had ruled for 407 years over a realm encompassing present-day Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan.

In **636 AD**, Umar dispatched an army under **Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās** to invade Kurdish lands. Battles such as **al-Qadisiyyah**, **Sharazor**, and **Great Zê** became decisive confrontations. These invasions were accompanied by widespread massacres; large numbers of Kurds—both civilians and non-combatants—were forcibly converted to Islam. Those who resisted, particularly those outside the direct military command of the Sasanians, were executed. Arab forces looted Kurdish homes, seized livestock and gold, and took women and girls as war captives to be transported to Arabia as **enslaved concubines**.

In **642 AD**, Arab forces under **Nuʿman ibn Muqrin** attacked **Eastern Kurdistan**, engaging in battles at **Damavand**, **Gerdashiran**, and **Khurreh Gawra**. These campaigns resulted in mass killings, the looting of settlements, and the enslavement of many Kurds.

Subsequent caliphs—**Uthman ibn Affan** (644–656 AD) and **Ali ibn Abi Talib** (656–661 AD)—continued to consolidate Arab control. Ali, a cousin of Muhammad, was assassinated in 661 AD by **Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam**. In the aftermath, **Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan** declared the establishment of the **Umayyad Caliphate** (661–680 AD) with Damascus as its capital.

The rise of the Islamic Caliphate spelled the **overthrow of the Kurdish Sasanian Empire**. Under religious decrees (*fatwas*) issued by Caliph Umar and other Islamic leaders, Kurdistan was brought under **systematic military occupation**. Tens of thousands of Kurds were massacred; tens of thousands of Kurdish women and girls were sold as slaves or held as sexual war captives; and around ten thousand Kurdish children were forcibly recruited into Arab armies, raised as Arabs, and later deployed against their own people.

Prior to these invasions, **no Arab populations resided in Iraq, Syria, or Iran**. These were historically Kurdish territories. Following the Arab occupation, Kurdish properties and agricultural lands were seized, and entire towns were plundered. Kurds were given a grim choice: **Arabization, death, or exile**. Fertile lands were reduced to wasteland, and major urban centers were renamed in Arabic—imposing Arab language, culture, and identity on historically Kurdish spaces. Cities such as **Najaf, Karbala, Basra, Nasiriyah, Baghdad, Salahaddin, Tikrit, Mosul, Ahvaz, Bandar Abbas, Raqqa, Aleppo, Idlib, and Latakia** were all subjected to this transformation.

Before the Muslim Arab invasions, the territories stretching **twenty parasangs** (about 108 kilometers) west of the Euphrates River—from **Kandava** in Persia to **Aleppo** and **Latakia**—were integral to the Sasanian Kurdish realm, with **Ctesiphon** as its capital, situated about 35 kilometers south of present-day Baghdad.

The Sassanid empire map

The question remains: **Had the Islamic Caliphs not invaded Kurdistan fourteen centuries ago, would the Kurds today still stand as the rightful heirs to one of the world's great and ancient civilizations?** Was this invasion the root cause of the enduring suffering of the Kurdish people—a chain of subjugation that continues into the present day? Even after forced Islamization, Kurds were denied sovereignty over their own lands. In the 20th century, they suffered atrocities such as the **Anfal campaign**; in the 21st century, they faced genocidal assaults from **ISIS**.

The Arab-Islamic conquest set a precedent for subsequent regional and global powers, providing both a model and justification for repeated invasions and massacres against the Kurds. Religion and ethnicity became interchangeable pretexts for dispossession. Over the centuries, **Kurdish lands were occupied, their resources plundered, their culture appropriated, their identity denied, and their language suppressed or diluted under foreign domination**.

2.3 – The Umayyad Arab Caliphate (661–750 AD)

The **Umayyad Caliphate** (661–750 AD), founded by the **Umayyad clan** of the Quraysh tribe to which the Prophet Muhammad belonged, established one of the largest empires in history. From its capital in **Damascus**, the Umayyads extended their rule over vast territories—including **Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, North Africa, parts of Central Asia, southern Europe, and as far west as Spain**. Their military reach even penetrated into **India**.

While celebrated in some Islamic historical narratives for territorial expansion, the Umayyad era was, for Kurdistan, a time of **continuous military occupation, forced Arabization, cultural suppression, and systematic violence**. Kurdish cities and villages were repeatedly attacked, their populations displaced or enslaved, and their lands redistributed to Arab settlers and soldiers.

Umayyad Caliphs and Their Role in Kurdistan

- **Muʿawiya I** (661–680 AD) – Founder of the Umayyad Caliphate; consolidated power in Syria and initiated expansion into Kurdistan and Iran.
- **Yazid I** (680–683 AD) – Infamous for the **Battle of Karbala** (680 AD) and military campaigns against resisting regions.
- **Muʿawiya II** (683–684 AD) – Short reign marked by instability.
- **Marwan I** (684–685 AD) – Restored Umayyad authority after internal conflicts.
- **Abdul Malik** (685–705 AD) – Strengthened Umayyad control in Kurdistan, Iran, and across the Middle East through sustained military campaigns.
- **Al-Walid I** (705–715 AD) – Expanded Umayyad dominance into Central Asia and India while continuing suppression of Kurdish uprisings.
- **Suleiman** (715–717 AD) – Maintained Umayyad military presence in Kurdish territories.
- **Umar II** (717–720 AD) – Focused more on administrative and religious reforms, though occupation policies remained in effect.
- **Yazid II** (720–724 AD) – Continued the policy of consolidating Arab control over Kurdistan.

- **Hisham ibn Abdul Malik** (724–743 AD) – Directed brutal campaigns against Kurdish towns and villages, declaring Kurds *infidels* and launching jihad that resulted in **tens of thousands killed** and **women and children enslaved for sale in Arabian markets**.
- **Al-Walid II** (743–744 AD) – His short reign saw continued instability.
- **Yazid III** (744 AD) – Brief rule with little change in Kurdish policy.
- **Ibrahim** (744 AD) – Another short-lived caliphate.
- **Marwan II** (744–750 AD) – The final Umayyad caliph; fought both Kurdish insurgents and Abbasid forces until his defeat by the Abbasids.

Umayyad Military Campaigns in Kurdistan and Iran

Several Arab generals and governors became notorious for their campaigns in Kurdistan and neighboring Iranian regions:

- **Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf** (Governor of Iraq, 694–714 AD) – Launched severe campaigns to crush Kurdish revolts, tightening Umayyad control over the Zagros and central Iran.
- **Qutayba ibn Muslim** – In 715 AD, expanded eastward into **Khorasan**, Central Asia (**Bukhara**, **Samarkand**), and secured Umayyad control of Persian territories.
- **Maslama ibn Abdul Malik** – Between 730–738 AD, fought Kurdish forces in the **Zagros Mountains**, led operations in **Tabaristan** (northern Iran), and engaged in the Caucasus.
- **Hisham ibn Abdul Malik** – Oversaw multiple campaigns to suppress Kurdish and Persian resistance, including efforts to subjugate the **Dailamites** of northern Iran and integrate all Kurdish principalities under Arab rule.
- **Marwan II** – Before his fall, he waged wars against Kurdish insurgents, managing to quell several uprisings in Kurdistan and Iran.

Impact on Kurdistan

Under the Umayyads, **mass killings, forced displacement, and Arabization** were systematically implemented across Kurdish regions. Villages were emptied, lands confiscated, and survivors often coerced into adopting **Arabic language, culture, and identity**. This process sought not only to expand political control but also to **erase Kurdish cultural and national identity** from the territories under Umayyad rule.

By the end of the Umayyad era, much of Kurdistan had been forcibly integrated into the Arab Caliphate's political, cultural, and religious framework—a transformation achieved through **military occupation, demographic engineering, and systematic suppression of local resistance**.

2.4 – The Abbasid Arab Caliphate Empire (750–1258 AD)

In **750 AD**, the Arab **Abbasid dynasty**, with the combined support of **Arab** and **Kurdish** military forces, overthrew the **Umayyad Caliphate** after 89 years of rule. The decisive **Battle of the Lower Zab**—fought in southern Kurdistan—marked the end of Umayyad dominance and the beginning of the Abbasid era.

Initially, the Abbasids secured Kurdish support by promising the restoration of Kurdish lands, properties, and political rights in exchange for military assistance. However, once in power, these promises were **completely abandoned**. Instead, the Abbasid rulers marginalized the Kurds, excluded them from governance, and used the ideology of *Islamic jihad* to justify **systematic repression, cultural erasure, and territorial dispossession**.

Key Abbasid Caliphs and Their Role in Kurdistan

- **Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah** (750–754 AD) – Founder of the Abbasid Caliphate.
- **Al-Mansur** (754–775 AD) – Transferred the capital from Damascus to **Baghdad**; launched military campaigns against Kurdish resistance.
- **Harun al-Rashid** (786–809 AD) – Celebrated for advancing science, architecture, and education, yet **plundered Kurdish lands** and appropriated Kurdish achievements under an Arab-Islamic identity, portraying Kurdish culture as subordinate.
- **Al-Maʾmun** (813–833 AD) – Expanded Arab cultural dominance in Kurdistan and Iran while promoting scientific activity.
- **Al-Muʿtasim Billah** (833–842 AD) – Strengthened **Turkic** military presence in Kurdistan and Iran; labeled Kurds as “infidels” and “fire-worshippers.”
- **Al-Mustansir Billah** (1236–1242 AD) – Reign marked by growing Mongol threats.
- **Al-Mustaʿsim Billah** (1242–1258 AD) – Killed in Baghdad during the Mongol invasion, ending Abbasid rule in the region.

The Destruction and Arabization of Kurdish Cities

Following their consolidation of power, the Abbasids embarked on a deliberate policy of **erasing Kurdish cultural identity**. Ancient Kurdish cities were destroyed, renamed, or rebuilt under Arabic names.

Original Kurdish City Name	**Arabic Name / Notes**
Seleucia — The city of *Seleucia* was founded in **305 BCE** by *Seleucus I Nicator*, one of Alexander the Great's generals who seized power after Alexander's death. Seleucia was located **30 kilometres south of Baghdad**, on the **right bank** and **northern side** of the Tigris River.	**Al-Mada'in** — During the **Muslim invasion under Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab** in **637 CE**, the twin cities of *Seleucia* and *Ctesiphon* were destroyed, and the treasures of the **Kurdish Sasanian Empire** were looted under Umar's command. Later, in the **8th century CE**, the city of **Baghdad** was founded by *Abu Ja'far al-Mansur* to replace Seleucia and Ctesiphon as the new administrative capital.
Ctesiphon — This city was founded in the **2nd century BCE** by *Mithridates I*, the **Parthian Kurdish king**, and later served as the **imperial capital** of several **Kurdish Sasanian monarchs**, including *Shapur I* (240–270 CE) and *Khosrow I Anushirvan* (531–579 CE). Ctesiphon was situated **35 kilometres south of Baghdad**, on the **left bank** and **southern side** of the Tigris River. The famous **Taq-e Kasra** (Arch of Khosrow) still stands today as a living testament to the Kurdish heritage of the region.	**Baghdad**
Nineveh	Mosul

Original Kurdish City Name	Arabic Name / Notes
Hira	Kufa / Najaf
Nibor	Nfr, Nippur- Once a sacred Kurdish religious center; looted and destroyed, now in Al-Qadisiyyah Province
Uruk	Completely destroyed during Muslim invasion
Ur	Completely destroyed during Muslim invasion
Babylon	Destroyed; nearby Hilla renamed Babil
Kharapa, Kharkas, Qurna	Destroyed; new city of Basra built nearby
Afamia	Rebuilt as Hama
Dora	Deir ez-Zor
Tedmor	Palmyra (Tadmur)
Bosra	Busra
Amisa	Homs (Hims)
Risafa	Raqqa
Tartus, Arados	Tartus
Ramisa, Lazqiya	Latakia (Al-Ladhqiya)

Kurdish Resistance to Abbasid Rule

From the outset, the Kurds resisted Abbasid domination in **Mosul, Ahvaz, Kirmashan, Wirme (Urmia)**, and other key strongholds. Notable confrontations include:

- **Al-Mansur** (754–775 AD) – Between 755–767 AD, waged bloody wars against the Kurds of Mosul, Kirmashan, Adelan, Luristan, Mukriyan, Wirme (Urmia), and Bilbas, resulting in mass killings.

- **General Isa ibn Musa** – Nephew of Al-Mansur; suppressed Kurdish uprisings in Bilbas, Wirme (Urmia), and Mukriyan.
- **Al-Muʿtasim** (833–842 AD) – In 830 AD, crushed Kurdish revolts in Wirme (Urmia), Bilbas, and Mukriyan; advanced into Ecbatana (Hamadan) and Awand, killing thousands and looting Isfahan.
- **Al-Mutawakkil** (847–861 AD) – With Kurdish collaborator Sharq Kurdi, occupied Khuzestan; banned Kurdish language and resettled Arab commanders.
- **Al-Muʿtadid** (892–902 AD) – In 895 AD, led campaigns against Kurdish strongholds in Mosul and Tikrit; devastated southern Kurdistan.
- **Al-Muqtafi** (1136–1160 AD) – Between 1130–1140 AD, fought Kurdish forces in Mosul, Amedi, Diyarbakir, and Hakkari.
- **Saladin's Late 12th-Century Campaigns** – Though Kurdish, Saladin fought rival Kurdish factions, first defeating the Zengid Kurds of Mosul, Aleppo, and Qamishli.

End of Abbasid Rule

From **750 to 1258 AD**, the Abbasid Caliphate ruled a vast domain—including **all of Kurdistan**, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and much of North Africa. Their reign lasted over **five centuries**, during which Kurdish lands were **plundered, depopulated, and subjected to forced cultural assimilation**.

In 1258 AD, the **Mongol invasion**—supported by Turkic forces—destroyed Baghdad, killed the last Abbasid caliph, and brought an end to Abbasid rule in the region. The devastation they left behind in Kurdistan was profound, laying the foundation for continued cycles of foreign domination.

Photographs of sites such as **Nibor (Nippur)**, once sacred Sumerian religious centers preserved by the Sasanian Kurds, stand as stark reminders of the deliberate destruction carried out under the banner of Islamic conquest.

Nibor (نفر, نيبّور / Nippur) The location of the ancient city of Nibor

Even today, Arab looters, with the necessary tools, are constantly engaged in stealing Kurdish historical resources—either to sell them or to falsely attribute them to their own cultural heritage, erasing their true origin and context.

An image of the ancient city of Nibor (Nippur), once the revered spiritual center of the Kurdish people and a prominent destination for pilgrimage. This highly urbanized and historically rich site stood as a testament to the region's deep cultural heritage. Tragically, in later centuries, it was misappropriated, renamed, and redefined under Arab control, erasing its true Kurdish identity from historical recognition.

The remnants of pottery and the unearthed artifacts from the plundered city of **Nippur** (ancient **Nibor**) stand as undeniable evidence that, despite modern claims incorporating it into the Arab cultural sphere, **Arabs possess no genuine historical or civilizational roots in this site**. Its heritage has been **recklessly looted and desecrated**, with little regard for the profound historical and cultural legacy it represents.

This image shows a **Lamassu** — an ancient protective deity originating from the early Kurdish civilizations. Depicted with a **human head**, the **wings of an eagle**, and the **body of a bull or lion**, the Lamassu symbolized divine guardianship over cities and palaces.

Today, this statue resides in **Room 6 of the British Museum in London**, within the "Assyrian Sculpture Court." However, in a deliberate act of historical

misrepresentation, artifacts from ancient Kurdish cities such as **Nibor** and other centers of Kurdish civilization are systematically labeled as “Assyrian.” This **politically motivated reclassification** serves to erase Kurdish heritage, aligning instead with the national narratives of Turkey, Arab states, and Iran — even at the expense of historical accuracy and truth.

The ancient walls and architectural remnants of the historic city of **Nibor**—monuments that, in any other part of the world, would be carefully preserved as part of a nation's cultural and historical heritage—are left exposed and neglected simply because they belong to the Kurds. This sacred city, with its **3,000-year-old fortifications**, stands in silent resistance against centuries of aggression. Nature itself could not erase it, yet Arab forces have succeeded in inflicting irreversible damage, eroding not just stone but memory.

2.5 – The Authority of the Samanid Dynasty of Persia (819–999 AD)

Following the gradual weakening of Abbasid control, the **Samanid Dynasty** emerged as a powerful force in **Khorasan** and **Samarkand**. In 819 AD, they decisively defeated Abbasid forces in the region, laying the foundation for a century and a half of rule. Between 819 and 999 AD, the Samanids governed a vast domain encompassing **eastern and central Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan**, and parts of **Kurdistan**, with **Bukhara** as their capital.

The Samanids devoted considerable effort to the promotion and codification of the **Persian language**, elevating it as a cultural and administrative medium. This linguistic policy drew upon both **Kurdish** and **Arabic** influences, blending them into a refined literary style. Under their patronage, celebrated Persian poets such as **Rudaki** flourished, and works like *Kalila and Dimna* gained prominence as literary and cultural touchstones of the era, enhancing the prestige of the Persian-speaking elite.

However, the dynasty's ambitions extended beyond cultural pursuits. The Samanids launched several **military campaigns** into **Kermashan** and **Wirme (Urmia)** in an attempt to subjugate Kurdish territories. Despite their resources and military organization, they failed to achieve lasting control over these fiercely independent regions.

By the close of the 10th century, the Samanids faced mounting pressure from the **rising Seljuk Turks** and other regional rivals. In 999 AD, their rule came to an end when

Mahmud of Ghazni conquered their territories, marking a significant shift in the balance of power across Central Asia and the Kurdish borderlands.

Map of the Samanid Dynasty's Rule

2.6 – The Rule of the Kurdish Hadhaban Dynasty (906–1144 AD)

The **Hadhaban Dynasty**—also recorded in historical sources as **Hazaban, Hozaban, or Hozawan**—was a prominent Kurdish ruling house that governed extensive territories in **southern, northern, and eastern Kurdistan** between 906 and 1144 AD. Their domain encompassed strategically important regions including **Hawler (Erbil), Soran, Duhok, Shingal, Nineveh (Mosul), Bilbas, Wirme (Urmia), Mukriyan, Maragheh, Salmas,** and **Hakkari**.

Hawler (Erbil) served as the dynasty's **winter capital**, while **Salmas** functioned as the **summer capital**, reflecting the seasonal mobility of their administrative center. Over the course of more than two centuries, the Hadhaban rulers navigated periods of consolidation, external pressure, and both military and political challenges from rival powers such as the Abbasids and Turkic forces.

Rulers of the Hadhaban Dynasty

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Notable Events and Achievements
Muhammad, son of Bilal Hazaban	906	Established Kurdish authority in resistance to the Abbasids. Successfully repelled Abbasid assaults, reclaiming Kurdish lands from Arab control and restoring them to native rule.
Ja'far, son of Shakoya	943	Consolidated control over the Hazaban domain in **Salmas**, safeguarding and continuing Kurdish governance in the region.
Mir Abu Heja Mask, son of Chako	1000	Maintained stability and further entrenched Hazaban authority.
Abu Heja, son of Rabibadawla	1040	Strengthened centralized authority, enhancing the dynasty's regional influence.
Mir Sharafadin 'Isa, son of Mask	1045	Continued the unbroken rule of the Hazaban family in Kurdistan.
Mir Salar, son of Musa	1046	Preserved dynastic continuity during a stable phase of governance.
Mir Abu Hasan 'Ali, son of Mask	1046–1048	Oversaw a period of stability under Hazaban administration.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Notable Events and Achievements
Mir Abu ‘Ali Ahasan, son of Mask	1048–1063	Achieved greater political centralization and regional stability.
Mir Abu Heja II Hussein, son of Baba ‘Ali Hasan	1063–1080	Presided over an era when the Hazaban domain included **Mihraniyya, Rawadiyya, Hakamiya,** and **Maraniyya**. Played a significant role in Kurdish political and cultural life.
Unknown ruler	1080–1144	Oversaw territorial expansion, including the liberation of parts of northern Kurdistan from the Turkic **Atabeg Oghuz**. Ultimately, the dynasty was overthrown through a combination of military assault and political deceit. The Turks, unable to defeat the Kurds militarily, resorted to manipulation—attacking from the north under the Atabeg Oghuz and from the east under **Imad al-Din Zangi**—leading to the dismantling of the Hadhaban authority.

The fall of the Hadhaban Dynasty illustrates a recurring pattern in Kurdish history: **military resilience undermined by external manipulation and betrayal**. Despite centuries of governance, the dynasty’s end marked another chapter in the long struggle of Kurdish political autonomy against encroaching regional powers.

2.7 – The Rule of the Kurdish Buyid Dynasty (934–1048 AD)

The **Buyid Dynasty**—often described in historical sources as **Daylamite** or **Tati** in origin—emerged from the mountainous regions near the **Caspian Sea**. During the later period of the **Abbasid Caliphate**, members of the Buyid family rose to prominence as

highly respected generals within the Abbasid military. When Abbasid authority weakened, the Buyids seized the opportunity to consolidate their own power.

Initially, they established rule in **Shiraz**, and in 945 AD they captured **Baghdad**, effectively controlling the Abbasid heartland. Although they maintained the Abbasid caliph as a symbolic religious figurehead to preserve legitimacy under **Sharia law**, the Buyids exercised full independence in practice.

Linguistically, the dynasty spoke dialects of **Tati** and **Zazaki**. While referred to as "Daylamites" by some chroniclers, evidence points to their Kurdish identity. Even today, certain Kurdish communities in northern Kurdistan refer to their dialect as **Dimili**, which is closely related to the ancient Daylamite tongue. In reality, **Dimili**, **Zazaki**, and **Tati** are interrelated branches of the **Kurdish language family**.

The Buyid period represented both a **political challenge** to Abbasid dominance and a **cultural bridge** between Kurdish heritage and the Persianate world.

Notable Rulers of the Buyid Dynasty

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Capital & Region of Rule**	**Key Achievements / Characteristics**
Ali ibn Buya (Imad al-Dawla)	934–949	Shiraz – Province of Shiraz	First semi-independent Abbasid governor to seize Shiraz. Established the foundation of Buyid authority under weakened Abbasid oversight. Died of natural causes.
Ahmad ibn Buya (Mu'izz al-Dawla)	945–967	Baghdad – Province of Baghdad	Captured Baghdad in 945 AD. Reduced the Abbasid caliph to a puppet ruler and declared himself **"Amir al-Umara"** ("Commander of Commanders"). Died of natural causes.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital & Region of Rule	Key Achievements / Characteristics
Hasan ibn Buya (Rukn al-Dawla)	935–976	Ray – Regions of Ray, Ecbatana (Hamadan), Isfahan	Extended Buyid influence into northern Iran. Engaged in military conflicts with Abbasid governors. Died of natural causes.
Fanna Khusraw (Adud al-Dawla)	949–983	Shiraz and Baghdad – Provinces of Shiraz and Baghdad	The most celebrated Buyid ruler. Expanded the dynasty's reach to its greatest extent. Founded hospitals and prisons, promoted education, and strengthened administrative systems. Died of natural causes.
Sharaf al-Dawla	983–988	Baghdad – Southern Iraq	Engaged in destructive civil wars, particularly against his brother **Baha' al-Dawla**, causing instability and widespread fear.
Baha' al-Dawla	988–1012	Baghdad and Shiraz – Southern Iraq and Southern Iran	Restored order after years of fratricidal conflict. Died of natural causes.
Sultan al-Dawla	1012–1021	Shiraz – Southern Iran	Lost Baghdad and southern Iraq during escalating conflicts with the Seljuks.
Abu Kalijar Marzuban	1021–1048	Shiraz – Southern Iran	Last major Buyid ruler. Oversaw the slow decline of Buyid influence. Died during Seljuk expansion into Buyid lands.
Malik Rahim	1048–1055	Baghdad	Final Buyid ruler. Briefly retained Baghdad before being overthrown by **Tughril Beg** of the Seljuks, marking the dynasty's end.

The **Buyid era** stands as a remarkable example of a Kurdish-ruled dynasty navigating a **dual identity**—Kurdish in origin yet Persianate in culture—while holding de facto control over the heart of the Islamic world. Their fall to the Seljuks reflects a familiar pattern in Kurdish history: **political autonomy undermined by the rise of new imperial powers**.

Map of the Buyid Dynasty's Territorial Control

2.8 – The Kurdish Shaddadid Dynasty (950–1258 AD)

The **Shaddadid Dynasty** was a Kurdish ruling family that controlled large parts of the **Caucasus**, including territories that are now within **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan**, for over three centuries (950–1258 AD). At its height, the Shaddadid realm encompassed **all of present-day Azerbaijan and Armenia**.

The official title of the state was the **Kurdish Shaddadid Authority**. The **capital city** was **Ganja** (in present-day Azerbaijan), which served as the political and administrative hub, while **Dvin** (historically Artashat, in present-day Armenia) functioned as the **commercial capital**. The **Kurdish language** was spoken by both the rulers and the general population.

Notable Rulers of the Shaddadid Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital / Region	Key Achievements / Events
Shaddad ibn Budayhan	951–976	Ganja	Founder of the dynasty. Former military commander who rose to power after the decline of the Samanids. Established Kurdish control over Ganja.
Fadl ibn Shaddad	976–997	Ganja, Adana	Expanded Kurdish authority in the region. Strengthened Ganja as a center of governance.
Muhammad ibn Fadl Shaddad	997–1027	Ganja, Adana	Skilled military leader. Defended Shaddadid territories against external invasions.
Shams al-Dawla Abulfath	1027–1031	Ganja, Adana	Short reign marked by growing foreign threats. Death led to increased vulnerability to invasions.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital / Region	Key Achievements / Events
Muzaffar al-Dawla Abulqasim	1031–1052	Ganja	Attempted to restore the dynasty's strength but was ultimately defeated and killed by Seljuk forces in 1052 AD.
Shahriyar ibn Muhammad	1052–1073	Ganja	Resisted Seljuk imperial expansion. Killed by Seljuks in 1073 AD, dealing a severe blow to the dynasty.
Sulaiman ibn Shams al-Dawla	1073–1093	Ganja	Reign weakened by internal discord and external attacks. Captured and executed by Seljuks in 1093 AD.
Shah Aziz al-Din	1250–1258	Dvin, Arran	Last major Shaddadid ruler. Killed during the Mongol invasion under Hulagu Khan, marking the dynasty's end.

Succession and Governance

The Shaddadid leadership was hereditary, typically passing from father to son. However, later years were marred by **internal disputes within the royal family**, weakening centralized authority. These succession struggles often opened the door to foreign interference and invasions.

External Pressures

From the mid-11th century onwards, the Shaddadids faced relentless **Seljuk expansion**. Some rulers sought temporary alliances with the Seljuks, while others resisted militarily. By the 13th century, the rising **Mongol Empire** posed an even greater threat.

The dynasty's final collapse came in **1258 AD** when **Shah Aziz al-Din** was killed during the Mongol conquest. This defeat not only ended Shaddadid rule but also accelerated the **Turkification** of Kurdish lands in the Caucasus. Many Kurds in the region were gradually assimilated into Turkic identity—a process that transformed descendants of the original Kurdish population into political and cultural adversaries of the Kurdish nation.

One of the dynasty's notable military achievements was the victory of **Abu al-Asir al-Kurdi** at **Dvin** over the Byzantine Roman army, dated between **1022–1040 AD**. This victory symbolized Kurdish resilience in the Caucasus against one of the most powerful empires of the era.

Territorial extent of the Shaddadid Dynasty, showing Kurdish political control in the Caucasus between 950–1258 AD.

2.9 – The Kurdish Rawadi Dynasty (950–1071 AD)

The **Rawadi Dynasty** was a prominent Kurdish ruling family that governed significant parts of **Eastern Kurdistan** for **121 years** during the 10th and 11th centuries AD. Emerging in the aftermath of the Abbasid Caliphate's decline, the Rawadis consolidated their authority over a strategically important region with **Tawrez (Tabriz)** as their political capital. **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))** also became a major administrative and intellectual center under their rule.

Rulers of the Rawadi Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Governed Regions	Notable Achievements / Events
Muhammad ibn Hussein Rawadi	950–955	Tawrez (Tabriz), Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)), Ardewel (Ardabil)	Founder of the Rawadi authority. Consolidated Kurdish governance in Eastern Kurdistan. Died a natural death.
Abul-Hayja Hussein	955–988	Tawrez (Tabriz), Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)), Ardewel (Ardabil), Mukriyan, Wirme (Urmia), Bilbas	Expanded territory and unified Kurdish forces. Killed in battle against Armenian forces in 988 AD.
Abul-Hayja Mamlan	988–1000	Same as above	Maintained stability and territorial integrity. Died a natural death.
Abu Nasr Hussein II	1000–1025	Same as above	Strengthened political authority and defensive structures.
Abu Mansur Wahsudan	1025–1059	Same as above	Repelled Oghuz Turk incursions in the Sahand Mountains. Promoted Kurdish culture and governance. Killed in 1059 during the Seljuk invasion.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Governed Regions	Notable Achievements / Events
Abu Nasr Mamlan II	1059–1070	Same as above	Constructed the Ardewel (Ardabil) fortress. Killed under Seljuk pressure by Alp Arslan in 1071.
Ahmadil ibn Ibrahim ibn Wahsudan	1100–1116	Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)), Tawrez (Tabriz)	Moved the capital to Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)). Participated in Seljuk campaigns in Syria and in peace talks with Crusaders. Assassinated by the Ismailis in Baghdad in 1117.

Military Conflicts and Resistance

- **1029 AD** – Wahsudan allied with the Kurdish Hadhbani forces in **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))** to resist the invading Oghuz Turks.
- **1040 AD** – Muzaffar Suzdani, son of Mamlan, led **10,000 Kurdish warriors** from Tawrez (Tabriz) in an offensive against the Oghuz Turks in **Gilan**. Thousands of Turks were killed; survivors fled toward **Wirme (Urmia)** and then **Hakkari**, where Kurdish forces encircled them in unfamiliar mountainous terrain, killing approximately **1,500** and capturing the rest, including **seven Oghuz emirs**. All looted goods were recovered.
- During this period, Kurdish Daylamites from the Tat region—whose forces were composed of Kurds from **Gilan** and **Mazandaran**—asserted greater independence from Abbasid authority by adopting the royal title **Shahanshah** (King of Kings).

Turkish Expansion and Decline of the Rawadis

The Oghuz Turks, the military vanguard of the **emerging Seljuk Empire**, launched devastating raids across Kurdistan:

- **1037 AD** – The Kurdish-populated city of **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))** was destroyed and looted by the Oghuz Turks. Soon after, they attacked the Hadhbani tribe in **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, massacring civilians despite Kurdish resistance. The Turks' advanced cavalry and weaponry gave them the advantage.
- **1071 AD** – The Oghuz Turks besieged **Wirme (Urmia)**, targeting the **Abah Hajar** and **Hadhbani** Kurdish clans. The Kurds resisted for ten days but were eventually overwhelmed. This marked the **first recorded instance of Wirme (Urmia) falling under Azerbaijani Turkic control**—a region that until then had never been ruled by a Turkic dynasty.
- Seljuk forces under **Tughril Beg's general, Emir Mansur**, attacked **Erivan**, while another Turkish army led by **Buqa** assaulted **Diyarbakir** and **Peshkhabur**, committing large-scale massacres and looting against Kurdish populations.

The decline of the Rawadi Dynasty reflected the larger geopolitical shift in the Middle East during the 11th century, as Turkic powers replaced older Kurdish and Persian-led states. Nevertheless, the Rawadis left a strong legacy of **Kurdish governance, cultural patronage, and military resistance** in Eastern Kurdistan.

2.10 – The Kurdish Hasan Wahidi Dynasty (959–1015 AD)

The **Hasan Wahidi Dynasty** was a Kurdish ruling family that governed parts of **Eastern Kurdistan** for **56 years** during the 10th and early 11th centuries AD. They emerged in the political vacuum created by the decline of Abbasid authority and established their capital in **Dinawar** (present-day Dīnūr in Kirmashan Province).

During their reign, the Hasan Wahidis controlled the key regions of **Luristan, Kermashan, Dinawar, Nahavand, Ecbatana (Hamadan), and Tawrez (Tabriz)**. The city of **Kirmashan** also served as a major administrative and intellectual center during this period.

Rulers of the Hasan Wahidi Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Key Characteristics
Hasan Wahidi ibn Hussein	961–979	Founder of the dynasty; established semi-independence under nominal Buyid suzerainty. Exercised significant influence over Eastern Kurdistan. Died of natural causes in 979 AD. His death led to succession disputes among his sons.
Badr al-Din Hasan Wahid	979–1014	Strengthened administrative systems and improved the economic infrastructure of the state. Introduced a **Kurdish currency** to facilitate trade and governance. Died in 1014 AD and was succeeded by his son Zahir.
Zahir ibn Hilal	1014–1015	A young and politically inexperienced ruler. His short reign was marked by internal instability and external pressure from the Buyids. Deposed and killed shortly after losing power.

Following the fall of the Hasan Wahidi dynasty in **1015 AD**, Eastern Kurdistan was divided among the **Annazids, Buyids, and Kakayids**. Within decades, these territories fell under the expanding authority of the **Seljuks**, who brought the region under the control of **Tughril Beg**.

2.11 – The Arrival of the Turkic Nation in Kurdistan (977–1186 AD)

The arrival of the **Turkic peoples** in Kurdistan marked a significant demographic and political transformation in the region.

The Ghaznavid Empire and Early Turkic Expansion

The Turkic commander **Alp Tigin** rose through the ranks of the **Samanid** military, eventually becoming governor of **Ghazna** (present-day Ghazni, Afghanistan). In **963 AD**, amid Samanid political weakness, Alp Tigin declared the province's independence. His successor and son-in-law, **Sabuktigin**, consolidated power and founded the **Ghaznavid Empire**.

The Ghaznavids ruled **Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and parts of Kurdistan** between **977–1186 AD**. Their rulers were predominantly of **Qarluq Turk** origin. While presenting themselves as champions of Islam, they promoted **Persian** as their administrative language and imposed strict central authority over conquered regions.

The most prominent Ghaznavid ruler, **Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni** (998–1030 AD), conducted 17 major invasions into India, targeting Hindu and Buddhist centers. His campaigns brought immense wealth to Ghazni but were also marked by mass killings and destruction.

Rulers of the Ghaznavid Dynasty

Ruler	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Summary of Key Events**
Sabuktigin	977–997	Founded the Ghaznavid state; launched campaigns into India; died of illness in Balkh.
Isma'il	997–998	Defeated in a succession conflict by his brother Mahmud.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Key Events
Mahmud (Yamin al-Dawla)	998–1030	Expanded empire into Khorasan and India; died of malaria and tuberculosis.
Muhammad	1030	Brief rule; deposed by twin brother Mas'ud and later killed.
Mas'ud I	1030–1040	Lost the Battle of Dandanaqan to the Seljuks; killed in the Giri region.
Mawdud	1041–1050	Regained Balkh and Herat; died naturally.
Mas'ud II	1048	Deposed and assassinated in the same year.
Ali	1048–1049	Murdered by Vizier Abd al-Rashid.
Abd al-Rashid	1049–1052	Exiled after palace coup.
Tughril	1052–1053	Usurper; killed by loyalist guards.
Farukh-Zad	1053–1059	Restored royal rule; died naturally.
Ibrahim	1059–1099	Maintained peace with Seljuks; promoted cultural projects.
Mas'ud III	1099–1115	Built monuments in Ghazni; died naturally.
Shirzad	1115–1116	Deposed and killed by brother Arslan Shah.
Arslan Shah	1116–1117	Blinded brothers; killed after Seljuk intervention.
Bahram Shah	1117–1157	Restored rule after Ghurid attacks; longest reign.
Khusrau Shah	1157–1160	Fought Ghurid uprisings; died naturally.
Khusrau Malik	1160–1186	Moved capital to Lahore; executed by the Ghurids in 1191.

Turkic Migrations and Impact on Kurdistan

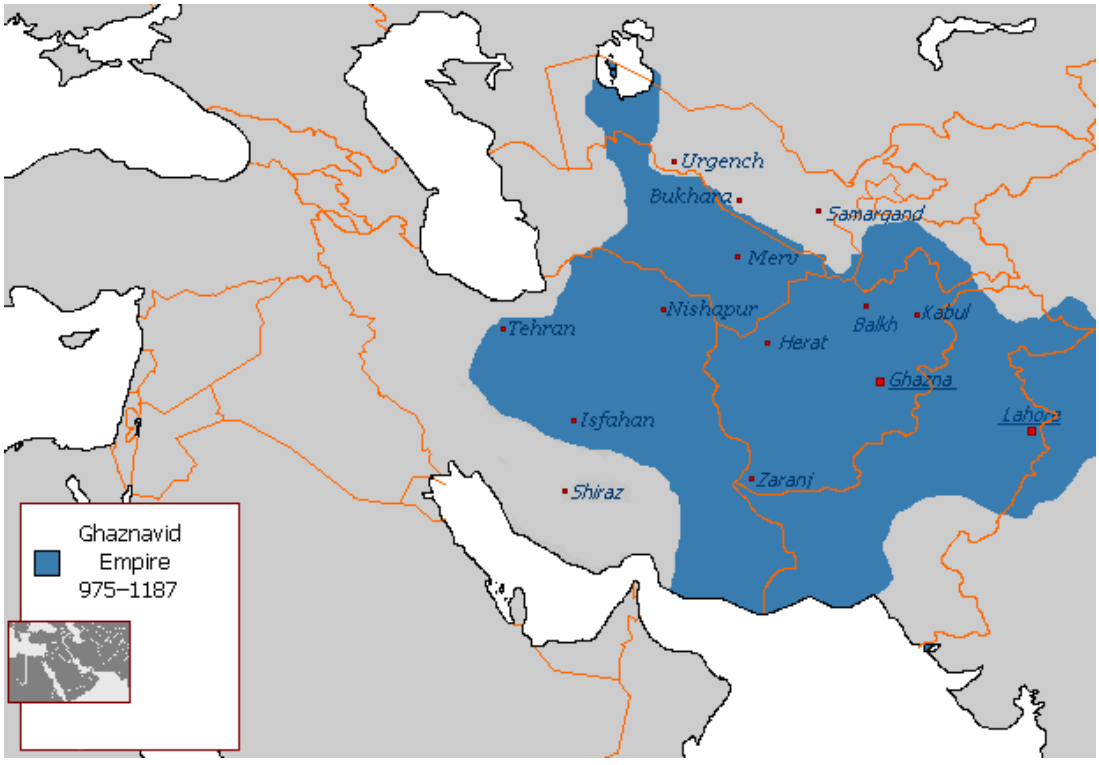
From the **early 11th century**, Turkic tribes of **Tatar** and **Kipchak** origin migrated westward from **Mongolia**, entering **the Caucasus, the Caspian littoral, and**

Kurdistan. Operating under the pretext of trade and herding, tribes such as the **Afshar, Bayandur, Salur, Oghuz, Deylam, and Qajar** soon turned to raiding Kurdish lands.

Armed with cavalry, bows, spears, and swords, these groups massacred local Kurdish populations, seized property, and displaced entire communities. The Kurds—long resident in these lands—were politically fragmented into independent tribal units, while the Turkic newcomers operated as united, militarized confederations. This imbalance allowed even small groups of Turkic settlers to dominate, displace, or forcibly assimilate much larger Kurdish populations.

Many areas that are today **Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan** were predominantly Kurdish-speaking before these invasions. Turkic rulers imposed **language bans** on Kurdish, enforced **Turkification**, and altered the region's demographics.

Under the **Oghuz confederation**, Turkic forces seized the lands of the **Shaddadid dynasty** (modern Azerbaijan) and key cities such as **Ganja, Baku, Shirwan, Nakhchivan, Lankaran, Ardewel (Ardabil), Rebar (Rasht) , Lahijan, and Ramswar (Ramsar)**—transforming their cultural and linguistic identity to conform to Turkic rule.



The Map of the Ghaznavid Empire

2.12 – The Kurdish Marwanid Dynasty (983–1085 AD)

The **Marwanids** were a Kurdish dynasty that ruled over significant parts of **Northern and Western Kurdistan** for **102 years** during the 10th and 11th centuries AD. They emerged as a strong regional power in the aftermath of political instability and fragmentation in the region. Their **capital** was the city of **Fāriqīn** (modern-day Silvan), while **Diyarbakir** became an important administrative, cultural, and economic center under their rule.

Rulers of the Marwanid Dynasty

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Territory Governed	Era Overview
Baba Shujaʿ Badh ibn Dustak	983–990	Diyarbakir, Bitlis, parts of Jazira (Fāriqīn/Silvan)	Founder of the Marwanid state; united Kurdish tribes under centralized leadership. Killed in battle against Buyid forces.
Baba ʿAli Hasan ibn Marwan	990–997	Diyarbakir, Bitlis, parts of Jazira	Consolidated Marwanid power; maintained diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Empire and the Buyids. Died of natural causes.
Mumahida Dawla Saʿid	997–1001	Diyarbakir, Bitlis, parts of Jazira	Assumed control but later abdicated. Died peacefully.
Nasir al-Dawla Ahmad ibn Marwan	1001–1061	Diyarbakir, Edessa (Urfa), Hilwan, Hasakah, Qamishli, Fāriqīn (Silvan)	Considered the **golden era** of the Marwanids; marked by cultural growth, architectural projects, and economic prosperity. Died peacefully.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Territory Governed	Era Overview
Nazim al-Dawla Nasir ibn Ahmad	1061–1079	Diyarbakir, Fāriqīn (Silvan)	Faced continuous Seljuk incursions; lost Edessa but successfully repelled several attacks.
Abu Saʿid Mansur	1079–1085	Diyarbakir, Fāriqīn (Silvan)	Led a 6-year resistance against Seljuk expansion before being defeated and killed in battle, marking the end of Marwanid sovereignty.

2.13 – The Kurdish Annazid Dynasty (990–1117 AD)

The **Annazid dynasty** was a Kurdish ruling family that controlled **Eastern and Southern Kurdistan** for **127 years**, from the late 10th to the early 12th centuries AD. Their power base was initially in **Hulwan** (near present-day Sarpol-e Zahab in Kirmashan Province), a city of great historical significance dating back to the **Median era**. Hulwan had been fortified during the **Kurdish Sasanian** period but was later plundered and destroyed by **Seljuk Turkic** forces, with its inhabitants forbidden from rebuilding.

The Annazids rose to prominence during the decline of Abbasid authority, often navigating complex alliances and conflicts with neighboring Kurdish dynasties, Turkic invaders, and Arab tribal confederations. Their capital was later moved to **Sharazur**, a key Kurdish stronghold.

Rulers of the Annazid Dynasty

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Administrative Region(s)	Era Overview
Baba Fath Muhammad ibn Anaz	990–1011	Hulwan, Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Founded the dynasty; expanded territory through campaigns against the Banu Uqayl and Banu Mazyad. Faced military pressure from the Hasanwahids and sought Buyid protection in 1006 AD.
Husayn al-Dawla ibn Baba Shawq	1011–1046	Hulwan, Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah, Ecbatana (Hamadan), Kirmashan	Extended control to Ecbatana (Hamadan) and Kirmashan; engaged in conflicts with Shams al-Dawla and Oghuz Turkic forces. Died in 1046 AD.

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Administrative Region(s)	Era Overview
Muḥalhil ibn Muhammad	1046–1055	Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Struggled with internal family disputes and growing Seljuk pressure; killed by Seljuk forces.
Surkhab al-Din Muhammad	1055–1070	Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Maintained authority but faced continual external challenges from Seljuks and rival Kurdish factions.
Saʿdi ibn Baba Shawq	1070–1091	Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Managed a fragile balance between diplomacy and conflict with neighboring powers; sectarian tensions between Shiʿa and Sunni groups shaped much of his rule.
Surkhab II ibn Badr	1091–1107	Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Continued political maneuvering and military defense amid constant regional instability.
Abu Mansur ibn Surkhab	1107–1112	Sharazur, Daqouq, Dasqara, Mandali, Numaniyah	Maintained local authority during a period of chronic internal disputes and external pressure.
Surkhab III ibn Anaz	1112–1117	Luristan	Last ruler of the Annazids; defeated by Seljuk and other invading forces, marking the end

---

2.14 – The Seljuk Turks' Invasion of Kurdistan (1030 AD)

In the **11th century**, the Seljuk Turks emerged as a major force in the Middle East. Originating as a nomadic Turkic tribal confederation from **Central Asia**, they migrated into the Iranian plateau and Kurdish lands during the 10th century. In **1030 AD**, their

expansion began in earnest, with the Seljuks advancing from the highlands of **Transoxiana**—a region heavily influenced by Mongol and Turkic tribes—into territories of northern present-day Iran, encompassing what are now Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan.

A decisive turning point came in **1040 AD**, when **Sultan Tughril Beg**, the first ruler of the Seljuk Empire, defeated the Ghaznavids at the **Battle of Dandanqan**. This victory secured Seljuk dominance over much of Iran and opened the way for deeper incursions into **Kurdistan**. Over time, the Seljuks transformed the region's demographic composition, displacing large numbers of the indigenous Kurdish population and settling **Turkic-speaking Uzbeks, Turkmens, and Kazakhs** in their place.

By **1055 AD**, Tughril Beg had marched through Kurdish territories to capture **Baghdad**, the Abbasid Caliphate's capital. While the Abbasid Caliph retained his position as a religious figurehead, real political power rested with the Seljuk sultan. Tughril's reign (1040–1063 AD) was succeeded by **Alp Arslan** (1063–1072 AD) and **Malik-Shah** (1072–1092 AD), who further consolidated Seljuk control over **Iran, Iraq, and Kurdistan**. The Seljuk Empire endured until its decline and final defeat in **1157 AD**, when authority passed to the **Khwarazmian dynasty**.

Seljuk Campaigns in Kurdistan

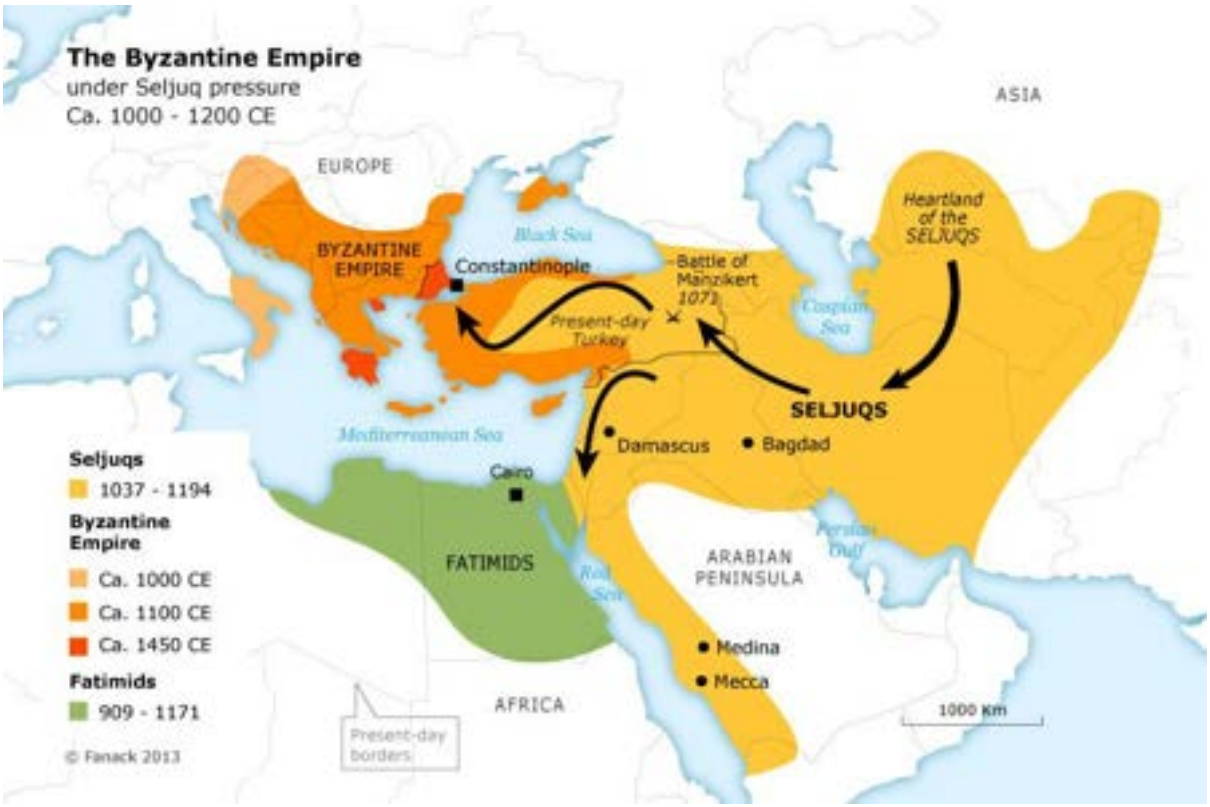
Following their victory over the Ghaznavids, the Seljuks pushed westward into Kurdish lands. Kurdish resistance was fierce, with frequent uprisings and defensive campaigns in **Wirme (Urmia), Kirmashan, Mosul, and Diyarbakir**. Nevertheless, the Seljuks gradually asserted dominance, often subjugating local rulers while allowing limited autonomy to cooperative Kurdish dynasties.

A pivotal moment came in **1071 AD** at the **Battle of Manzikert**, where Alp Arslan decisively defeated the Byzantine Emperor **Romanos IV Diogenes**. This victory not only secured Seljuk control over **Anatolia** but also expanded their power deep into **northern Kurdistan**. Initially, some Kurdish forces had fought alongside the Seljuks against the Byzantines, but afterward Alp Arslan turned against them. In the wake of the battle, the

Seljuks launched **massacres**, destroyed towns, and executed many Kurdish rulers, military leaders, and nobles.

Despite this brutality, certain Kurdish dynasties survived under Seljuk overlordship, such as:

- **The Artuqids** – A Kurdish dynasty that retained autonomous rule in **Diyarbakir** and **Mardin** while acknowledging Seljuk supremacy.
- **The Ayyubids** – The dynasty founded by **Saladin's family**, administered under **Nur ad-Din Zangi**, which controlled **Diyarbakir, Mardin, Hasakah, and Mosul** under Seljuk authority.



The Map of the Seljuk Turkic Empire

2.15 – The Rule of the Kurdish Shwankara Dynasty (1050–1180 AD)

The **Kurdish Shwankara dynasty** ruled significant parts of **Kurdistan** between **1050 and 1180 AD**, establishing control over major cities such as **Wirme (Urmia), Mahabad,**

Maragheh, Kirmashan, Ecbatana (Hamadan), Anshan (Shiraz), Marvdasht, Kazeroon, and **Juwanrom (Jahrom)**.

The dynasty traced its lineage to the **Shwankara tribal confederation**, a historically significant Kurdish grouping descended from the royal line of the **Sasanian Empire**. Their original capital was **Anshan** (later known as "Sheraz" and eventually "Shiraz"), in present-day **Fars Province, Iran**. During the **Tajik Samanid** era, the city name was officially changed to "Shiraz."

Rulers of the Shwankara Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Overview
Shams al-Din Shwankara	1050–1073	Founder of the dynasty; expelled Buyid authority from the region and established independent Kurdish rule. Conflicts with Shia Buyids were frequent, as most Kurds in Anshan and surrounding areas were Sunni. Expanded Shwankara control but faced growing pressure from the Seljuks.
ʿAli ibn Shams al-Din	1073–1100	Continued his father's rule but faced increased threats from the Seljuks and Ghaznavids. Eventually defeated and lost territory to both powers.
Nizam al-Din Shwankara	1100–1135	Attempted to restore Kurdish Shwankara power but suffered steady territorial losses to the Seljuks. Overthrown in 1135 AD.
Ahmad ibn Nizam al-Din	1135–1150	His reign was short-lived due to Seljuk dominance; captured and executed in Sedara after only three months of effective independent rule.
Shihab al-Din Shwankara	1150–1175	Retained partial control over Anshan but was in constant conflict with the Seljuks. Political instability and external threats weakened his rule.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Overview
Agha Shwankara	1175–1180	Last ruler of the dynasty; Seljuk expansion and later Mongol threats ended Shwankara independence, with their territory absorbed into the Seljuk realm.

2.16 – The Rule of the Scholarly Kurdish Dynasty of Danishmend Qazi (1072–1100 AD)

The **Danishmend dynasty** was founded by a distinguished Kurdish scholar and leader, **Danishmend Qazi**, in **Northern Kurdistan and Anatolia** between **1072 and 1100 AD**. The founders were of **Zaza Kurdish** origin, and the administrative language of the dynasty was **Zazaki Kurdish**.

Their domain extended over key cities including **Malatya, Erzincan, Trabzon, Sivas, Tokat, Kayseri, Amasya,** and **Niksar**. This principality emerged during a turbulent period of shifting power between the Byzantine Empire, the Seljuk Turks, and local Kurdish rulers, with the Danishmends often resisting encroachment from both Byzantine and Seljuk forces.

Rulers of the Danishmend Dynasty

Name of Pasha	Reign Period (AD)	Capital(s)	Key Events & Characteristics
Danishmend Qazi	1071–1084	Niksar	Founder of the dynasty; consolidated Kurdish authority in Amasya and Niksar; died naturally c. 1084 AD.
Gumushtagin Qazi	1084–1104	Niksar → Malatya	Expanded territory to include Elbistan and Cappadocia; resisted Byzantine and Seljuk incursions; died 1104 AD.
Amir Qazi	1104–1134	Niksar	Engaged in prolonged conflicts with the Byzantines; consolidated rule; died naturally in 1134 AD.
Malik Muhammad Qazi	1134–1142	Niksar	Internal dynastic disputes weakened the state; decline began.
Malik Yaghibasan Qazi	1142–1164	Sivas	Family power struggles led to loss of Niksar and Amasya to the Seljuks; fled during his reign.
Malik Ayna al-Dawla	1142	Malatya	Brief, poorly documented rule; overthrown within the same year.
Bozkurt	1164–1178	Tokat	Last significant ruler; Seljuk Sultan Kilij Arslan II defeated and massacred the Qazi family

Name of Pasha	Reign Period (AD)	Capital(s)	Key Events & Characteristics
			and Kurdish nobility, ending the dynasty's rule.

2.17 – The Kurdish Fathalawi Dynasty (1155–1432 AD)

The **Fathalawi dynasty** ruled for nearly three centuries (1155–1432 AD) in the **Province of Kurd** (present-day **Fars Province** in Iran). They belonged to the **Kurdish Shwankar pastoralist** tradition and claimed descent from the **Sasanian royal line**. Kurdish was the official administrative language of the dynasty.

Rulers of the Fathalawi Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Overview
Fathaladdin	1155–1181	Founder; consolidated Kurdish authority in the Province of Kurd; expanded governance but died during internal unrest.
Shahabaddin	1181–1210	Strengthened Fathalawi rule under Seljuk pressure; died under mysterious circumstances.
Muzaffaraddin	1210–1250	Resisted Mongol invasions; deposed during Mongol expansion.
Tajaddin	1250–1270	Attempted to defend autonomy from Ilkhanid Mongols; captured and executed.
Nizamaddin	1270–1300	Led an anti-Mongol revolt; died in exile under uncertain conditions.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Overview
Ismailaddin	1300–1330 AD	Continued resistance against Mongols and local rivals; died during ongoing conflicts.
Alimaddin	1330–1380	Faced Timurid expansion; assassinated under mysterious circumstances.
Bahramaddin	1380–1387	Last ruler; killed by Timur's forces, ending the dynasty.

The Fathalawis are remembered in Kurdish historiography as a continuation of **Kurdish sovereignty** rooted in pre-Islamic Sasanian traditions.

2.18 – The Khurshadi Kurdish Dynasty's Rule in Southwestern Kurdistan (1184–1598 AD)

The **Khurshadi dynasty** ruled for an extraordinary **413 years** over **Luristan, Ilam, Kirmashan, Khuzestan (Khorramshahr), Anshan (Shiraz), Arak, Malamir (Malayer), Ecbatana (Hamadan), Mahshahr, Bushehr, Bandar Genaveh, Anzali, Gachsaran, and eastern Mesopotamia** from Baghdad to Basra. Their capitals were **Khorawa (Khorramabad)** and **Shiraz**, and their official language was **Southern Kurdish (Ilami)**.

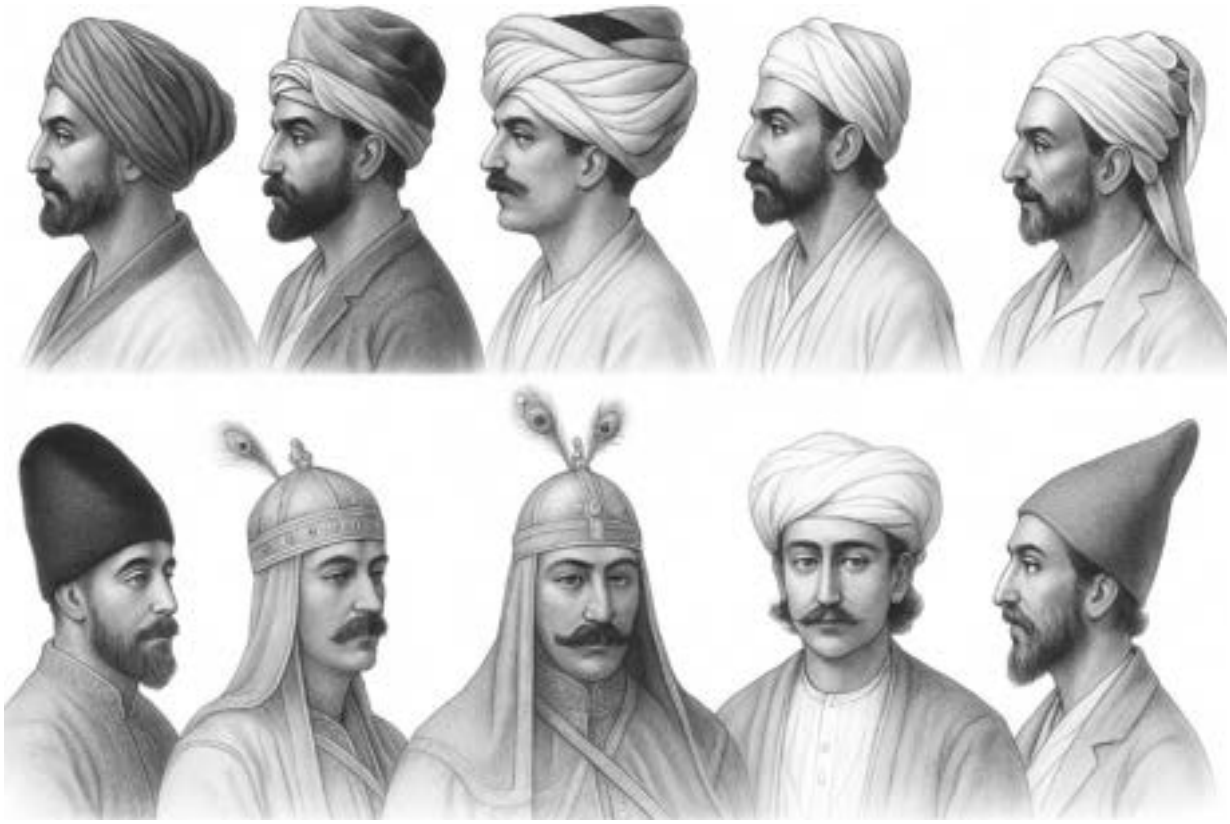
The dynasty was founded by **Ātā (Pasha) Beg-e Lur**, who established full independence from surrounding empires. However, internal rivalries, assassinations, and external invasions—first by the Mongols and later the Safavids—eventually eroded their power.

Rulers of the Khurshadi Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Notes
Shuja al-Din Khurshadi	1184–1224	Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Founder; established dynasty; died naturally.
Sayf al-Din Rostam	1224–1231	Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Continued stable governance.
Sharaf al-Din Abu Bakr	1231–1242	Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Died naturally.
Izz al-Din Garshasp	1242–1252	Shiraz	Died naturally.
Husam al-Din Khalil	1252–1258	Shiraz	Killed in family dispute.
Badr al-Din Mas‘ud	1258–1260	Shiraz	Allied with Mongols in Baghdad’s conquest; betrayed and killed.
Taj al-Din Shah	1278–1293	Shiraz	Betrayed and killed by Mongol Ilkhanids.
Jamal al-Din Khidr	1293–1294 AD	Shiraz	Short rule.
Husam al-Din ‘Umar	1294–1295	Shiraz	Brief reign.
Samsam al-Din Mahmud	1295–1302	Shiraz	Executed for alleged political murder.
Izz al-Din Ahmad Husayn	1302–1310	Shiraz	Stable governance.
Dawlat Khatun	1310	Shiraz	Brief female rule; transferred power to brother.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Notes
Izz al-Din Mahmud	1310–1329	Shiraz	Strengthened dynastic structure.
Shuja al-Din Muhammad	1329–1369	Shiraz	Long and stable reign.
Izz al-Din III	1370–1404	Shiraz	Exiled and killed by Timur's forces.
Sayyid Ahmad Atabeg	1405–1413	Shiraz	Defeated Timurids; restored stability.
Shah Husayn Atabeg	1413–1466	Shiraz	Prosperous reign.
Shah Rostam Atabeg	1466–1501	Shiraz	Continued stability.
Mir Aghur	1501–1560	Shiraz	Long reign; maintained independence.
Muhammad, son of Mir Aghur	1560–1593	Shiraz	Faced Safavid pressure.
Shawardi Atabeg	1593–1598	Shiraz	Last ruler; executed with family by Shah Abbas I, ending the dynasty.

The Khurshadis left a profound imprint on **Southwestern Kurdistan's political history**, maintaining independence for centuries and resisting both Mongol and Safavid domination until their final downfall in **1598 AD**. (See Appendix 3).



The Khurshadi Dynasty's Rule

The citadel of Khorawa (Khorramabad) was constructed by the authority of the Khurshadi princely dynasty.

2.19 – The Rule of the Ayyubid Dynasty (1171–1250 AD)

The **Ayyubid dynasty** was a **Muslim Kurdish ruling family** established in the 12th century AD by **Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Ayyubi (Saladin)**. Lasting **79 years**, the dynasty emerged from the political fragmentation following the decline of the Seljuk Empire and became celebrated for its decisive role in resisting Christian Crusader powers in **Palestine and Syria**.

Saladin was born in **Tikrit** (modern-day Iraq) in **1137 AD** into a prominent Kurdish military family. At the time, the majority of Tikrit's population was Kurdish. The family's ascent began under **Shirkuh**, Saladin's uncle and a general serving **Nur ad-Din Zengi**, the Seljuk ruler of Syria. After Shirkuh's death in **1169 AD**, Saladin assumed military and administrative command, dismantled the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt, and formally established **Ayyubid rule** in **1171 AD**.

Expansion and Governance

The Ayyubids built their initial power base in **Egypt**, which became the political center of their state. At its height, the dynasty's domain extended over **Egypt, Syria, Palestine, parts of Kurdistan, and sections of Anatolia**. Following the end of the Fatimid Caliphate, Saladin reinforced his authority by constructing a fortress in Egypt (later known as the **Cairo Citadel**).

Although ethnically Kurdish, the Ayyubid rulers governed through the **Islamic Arab cultural and administrative framework**, with **Arabic** serving as the official language of governance, law, and literature. This reflected both the Islamic cosmopolitanism of the period and the influence of their Egyptian power base.

The Capture of Jerusalem (1187 AD)

One of the dynasty's defining moments was the **liberation of Jerusalem** from Crusader control in **1187 AD**. This victory followed the **Battle of Hattin**, where Saladin decisively

defeated the forces of **Guy of Lusignan**, the Crusader King of Jerusalem, who was captured in battle. The defeat crippled Crusader military power in the region.

The Christian defenders, under **Balian of Ibelin**, negotiated the peaceful surrender of Jerusalem. Saladin permitted many Christian inhabitants to depart freely and allowed **Christian pilgrims** to visit the city, showing a degree of religious tolerance uncommon in medieval warfare.

The Third Crusade and Continued Conflict

The loss of Jerusalem prompted the **Third Crusade (1189–1192 AD)**, led by **Richard I of England**, **Philip II of France**, and **Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I**. Although the Crusaders failed to retake Jerusalem, they regained some coastal cities, notably **Acre**. Despite continuous hostilities, Saladin maintained a reputation for **chivalry and diplomatic skill**, even among his adversaries.

Political Fragmentation and Decline

Saladin died in **1193 AD**. His empire was then divided among his sons and relatives, fragmenting into smaller Ayyubid principalities. This division weakened the dynasty's unity and made it vulnerable to both **external threats** and **internal rivalries**.

The Ayyubid realms continued to exist, but their power gradually diminished, especially with the rise of the **Mamluks**, a military caste of former slave soldiers who had served under Ayyubid command. In **1250 AD**, the Mamluks seized power in Egypt, formally ending Ayyubid rule there.

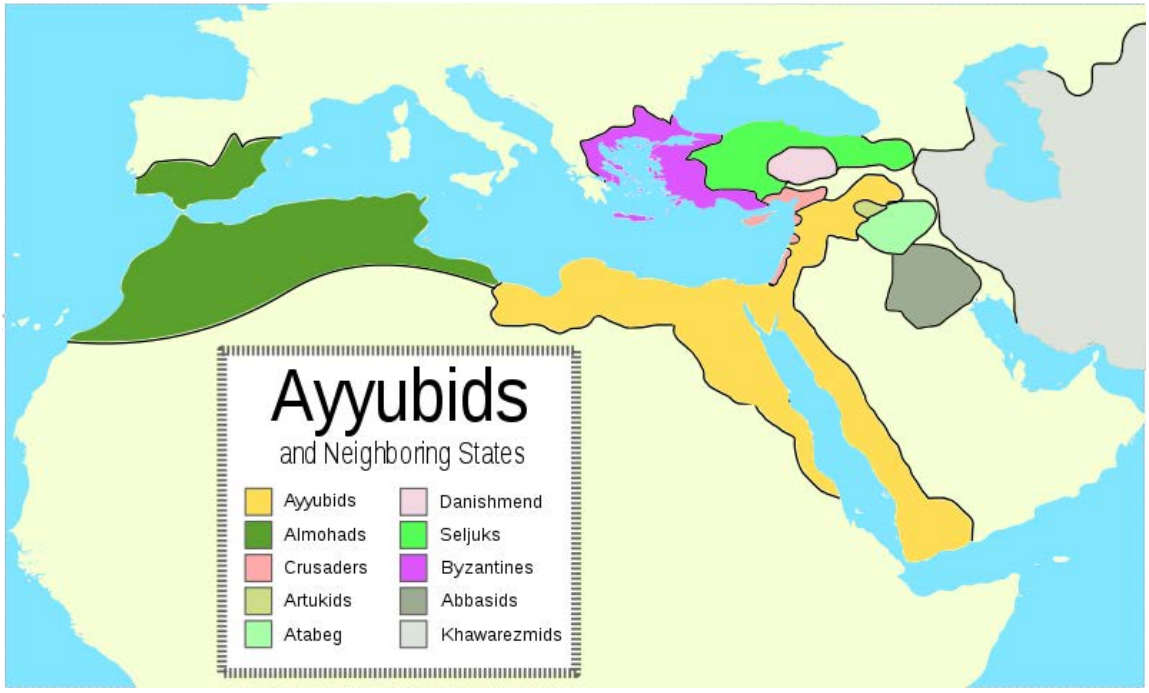
Impact on Kurdish History

While Saladin remains a celebrated figure in the Islamic world for his victories against the Crusaders, his decision to focus on Jerusalem rather than Kurdish statehood had

long-term consequences for the Kurdish people. In the centuries that followed, **Western political attitudes toward the Kurds** were influenced by the legacy of the Crusades, contributing to ongoing geopolitical support for **Turkish, Arab, and Persian powers** against Kurdish independence. Today, the Kurdish homeland remains divided among **Persia (Iran), Arabia (Iraq), Turkey, Azerbaijan,** and **Armenia**.

Strategic and Religious Importance of Palestine

- **Religious Significance**: Jerusalem houses **Al-Aqsa Mosque** and the **Dome of the Rock**, making it the third holiest site in Islam. For Muslims, its recapture was a religious duty; for Christians, it had been a symbol of triumph since its capture in **1099 AD**.
- **Strategic Value**: Palestine lies at the crossroads between **Syria, Egypt,** and the Crusader states, controlling vital trade and military routes.
- **Symbolic Power**: The struggle for Jerusalem was a central episode in the centuries-long conflict between Islamic and Christian powers in the medieval Near East.



Map of the Ayyubid Dynasty

Salah ad-Din Ayyubi (1137–1193 AD)

2.20 – The Rule of the Khwarazmian Turkish Dynasty (1193–1220 AD)

The **Khwarazmian dynasty** rose to prominence following the decline of Seljuk power in Central Asia and Iran. **Qutb al-Din Muhammad Shah** established the Khwarazmian principality between **1193 and 1220 AD**, consolidating power through military campaigns and the subjugation of neighboring rivals. His reign laid the foundations for a centralized administration and a formidable army.

From **1200 to 1220 AD**, the realm was ruled by ʿ**Ala al-Din Muhammad Khwarazm Shah**, a capable and ambitious leader who expanded the dynasty's influence. However, his decision to **plunder a Mongol trade caravan and execute its members** provided **Genghis Khan** with the pretext for a massive Mongol invasion.

Facing the overwhelming Mongol advance, ʿAla al-Din Muhammad fled westward, eventually dying in obscurity in a small village in southern Iran. His son, **Jalal al-Din**

Mangburni (1220–1231 AD), assumed leadership and attempted to rally resistance against the Mongols. Despite early successes, he was forced to retreat toward India. In **1231 AD**, Jalal al-Din was killed in present-day Afghanistan by a Kurdish warrior of the **Shwankara** family, marking the end of Khwarazmian rule.

2.21 – The Mongol Turkish Invasion of Kurdistan (1218–1220 AD)

In the early 13th century, the **Mongol Empire** under **Genghis Khan** launched a series of conquests stretching from China to the Middle East. After subjugating northern China (1211–1215 AD), Genghis turned westward. Between **1218 and 1220 AD**, the Mongols destroyed the Khwarazmian Empire, overrunning vast territories including **Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and large parts of Kurdistan**.

While the Khwarazmian realm was multi-ethnic—comprising **Kurds, Persians, Gilakis, and Baluchis**—its populations were devastated by **Turkic-Mongol forces**. The invasions were marked by **massacres, destruction of cities, and forced deportations**. Many adult males were executed, and thousands of Kurdish children were taken to Mongol military camps. Over time, **approximately 10,000 Kurdish children** were forcibly **Turkified** and integrated into Mongol-Turkic forces, particularly among **Azeri-Turkic communities**.

The Wider Mongol Expansion

- **1223 AD** – Genghis Khan invaded Eastern Europe, subduing regions from Constantinople and Greece to Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Kosovo, imposing the Mongol-Turkic language over many local tongues.
- **1227 AD** – Genghis Khan died at age 65 after being wounded in battle in Yinchuan, China. His burial site remains unknown, as all witnesses to the interment were executed to preserve secrecy.
- **1236–1241 AD** – **Batu Khan**, Genghis's grandson, invaded Russia, Poland, and Hungary.

- **1258 AD** – **Hulagu Khan**, another grandson, captured Baghdad, executed Caliph al-Mustaʿṣim, and ended the Abbasid Caliphate.
- **1271–1279 AD** – **Kublai Khan** conquered all of China, creating the largest contiguous empire in history.
- **Ilkhanate Formation** – Hulagu Khan established Mongol rule over Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kurdistan, and Afghanistan.

Notable Mongol-Affiliated Dynasties in Kurdistan and Anatolia

Dynasty Name	Founded (AD)	Primary Region of Rule
Germiyan Dynasty	1299	Western & Southern Kurdistan
House of Ali Osman	1299	Anatolia
House of Hamidoghlu	1300	Anatolia
House of Tekkeoghlu	1300	Antalya
House of Montasha Oghullari	1300	Anatolia
House of Chupanian	1318	Eastern Kurdistan
House of Zulqadr Oghullari	1340	Albustan & Marash (from Badinan in Southern Kurdistan to Marashi in Northern Kurdistan)
House of Garay	1420	Kermiya (Southern Kurdistan)
House of Khans of Ghazan	1445	Eastern Kurdistan
House of Khans of Qasmov	1452	Eastern Kurdistan

The Mongol and Timurid Campaigns in Kurdistan

The **1258 Mongol campaign under Hulagu Khan** passed directly through Kurdish lands. Hulagu's forces defeated and killed **Shah ʿAziz al-Din Shaddadi** in Ganja, ending Kurdish Shaddadid rule and replacing it with Turkish authority. Kurdish cities such as **Wirme (Urmia), Tawrez (Tabriz) and Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))** were attacked, with Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) becoming Hulagu's capital.

The invasions of **Tamerlane (Timur)** in **1393 AD** further devastated Kurdistan. His campaigns targeted the Kurdish principality of **Mir Ali Sharif**, ruler of Erzincan and Erzurum (1380–1393 AD). Despite fierce resistance, Mir Ali Sharif was killed, and his forces were annihilated.

Kurdistan in the Crossfire

For centuries, Kurdistan faced **Arab-Muslim invasions from the south and west**, which brought mass killings and looting, and **Turkish and Mongol incursions from the north and east**, beginning in the early 11th century. Key battles, such as the **Battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt) in 1071 AD**, fought in northern Kurdistan between Byzantine forces and the Seljuks, resulted in **the deaths of an estimated 10,000 Kurds** and the plunder of Kurdish-populated areas.

Section Three

3. The History of the Kurdish People and Their Region from the 12th to the 19th Century AD — The Past 800 Years

The Kurdish people are historically recognized as the direct descendants of the Medes, the ancient Aryan nation that, between the 9th and 6th centuries BC, united under the Median dynasty to establish a powerful and independent empire. For nearly three centuries, the Medes ruled their own territory before succumbing to foreign conquest. Historical sources confirm that the name “Medes” gradually evolved into “Kurds” over time, yet the people remained the same in ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage.

Over the past eight centuries, numerous Kurdish principalities and dynasties have ruled across Kurdistan and its neighboring regions. These included the Kurdish Mirs (princes), as well as the external powers that repeatedly sought to dominate the region, such as the Turkish Aq Qoyunlu, the Safavids, the Mokri, the Soran, the Babans, the Bilbas, the Turkish Afsharids, the Kurdish Zands, the Qajar Turks, the Ardalan, and the Shikak tribes. The following sections document who they were, the scope of their rule, and the challenges they faced under the constant pressure of foreign invasion and internal rivalries.

The cave dwellings near Haskif, where the local people had taken refuge during the Timurid invasions.

3.1 – The Emirate of Colemêrg (Hakkari) in Northern Kurdistan (1133–1847 AD)

The Emirate of Colemêrg, known in Ottoman records as the Emirate of Hakkari, governed the mountainous region of Hakkari in Northern Kurdistan for an extraordinary 714 years. Its capital was the city of Colemêrg (Julamerk, modern-day Hakkari), and the official administrative language was Kurdish.

From its establishment in the early 12th century until its annexation by the Ottoman Empire in 1847, this principality maintained varying degrees of autonomy. Its rulers navigated shifting alliances with larger regional powers such as the Zengids, Timurids, Aq Qoyunlu, Ottomans, and Safavids.

Name of the Emir	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Region of Governance**	**Summary of Key Events**
Babe Heija Hakari	1133–1143	Hakkari, including Asep, Tushi, Judaidla, and the Luheija mountains (north of Mosul)	Allied with Imad al-Din Zengi in 1133; passed rule to his son Baw Erji before dying in Mosul in 1143.
Baw Erji	1143–1200	Hakkari and Van	Consolidated the emirate's authority and maintained stability.
Ahmad Heija Hakari	1200–1221	Hakkari and Van	Expanded influence over Hakkari and Van; died of natural causes.
Izz al-Din Sher	1384–1423	Hakkari, southern and eastern Lake Van	Balanced alliances with Timurids and Qara Qoyunlu; family members captured by Qara Iskandar.
Izz al-Din Sher II	1470–1491	Hakkari	Regained lost territories; captured and executed in 1491 by Aq Qoyunlu Sultan Yaqub after massacres of Kurds.

Name of the Emir	Reign Period (AD)	Region of Governance	Summary of Key Events
Zahid Beg	1550–1570	Hakkari	Ruled during Ottoman–Safavid conflicts; internal family disputes weakened the emirate.
Imad al-Din	1634–1639	Hakkari	Known for military leadership and diplomacy between Ottomans and Safavids.
Nurullah Beg	1800–1847	Hakkari, Julamerk, parts of Van and Wirme (Urmia)	Pressured by Ottomans to withdraw from Rojava (1843–1846). In 1847, Ottoman forces massacred local Kurds, deposed the emir, and looted the region, ending the emirate.

The collapse of the Emirate of Colemêrg marked another chapter in the Ottoman policy of dismantling Kurdish autonomy through military suppression and forced incorporation into their imperial system.

3.2 – The Emirate of Bitlis in Northern Kurdistan (1187–1847 AD)

The Emirate of Bitlis ruled for 660 years under Kurdish leaders of the Rozaki (Rozhevi) lineage. The capital, Bitlis, served as a hub of Kurdish political, cultural, and commercial life, with Kurdish as the official language of governance.

Throughout its existence, the emirate skillfully navigated alliances with both Safavids and Ottomans, sometimes resisting outright military threats from both.

Name of the Emir	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Events
Sharif Pasha	1500–1533	Initially aligned with Ottomans against the Safavids; later shifted loyalty to Safavids. Killed by Ottomans in 1533 after resisting their sanctions.
Sharaf al-Din Bitlisi (Sharaf Khan)	1578–1597	Initially allied with Safavids; switched allegiance to Ottomans in 1578, aiding in campaigns against the Safavids. Authored the *Sharafnama*, the most comprehensive Kurdish history of its time. Abdicated in 1597; died in 1604.
Shams al-Din Beg	1597–1650	Maintained stability and continued his father's policies.
Abdul Khan	1650–1655	Strengthened autonomy but faced Ottoman accusations of land seizures; defeated and annexed into Ottoman territory in 1655.
Sharif Bey (last emir)	1820–1849	Last Rozhaki ruler; imprisoned by Ottomans after massacres in 1849 and disappeared in Constantinople.

By the mid-19th century, the Ottomans had fully integrated Bitlis into their provincial system, erasing one of the longest-standing Kurdish polities.

3.3 – The Principality of Chamishkizak (Çemişgezek) in Northern Kurdistan (1220–1663 AD)

The Principality of Chamishkizak, with its capital in what is now Dersim Province (renamed Tunceli by Turkey), was an Alevi Kurdish stronghold for over four centuries. Its territory included Malazgirt, Pertag (Pertek), Sağman, 16 districts, and 32 fortresses.

The principality preserved Kurdish cultural identity through its language, traditional clothing, and music, while resisting repeated invasions by Mongols, Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu, Safavids, and Ottomans.

Ruler / Dynasty	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Events
Malakishi Dynasty	1220–1452	Repelled Mongol and Aq Qoyunlu incursions; defeated Uzun Hasan of the Aq Qoyunlu Turks.
Sheikh Hasan	1452–1500	Expanded influence but faced counterattacks from Turkish Dulkadirids.
Haji Rostam Beg	1500–1556	Captured and executed by Ottomans after Safavid–Ottoman intrigue.
Pir Hussein	1556–1580	Reestablished rule under Ottoman Sultan Selim I; internal divisions weakened the principality.
Descendants of Malakishi	1580–1663	Annexed by the Ottomans in 1663 after massacres and looting; ruling family exiled.

The fall of Chamishkizak ended centuries of Alevi Kurdish autonomy in the Dersim region.

3.4 – The Emirate of Haskif in Northern Kurdistan (1232–1525 AD)

Founded in 1232 AD by Malik Masʿud, a descendant of Salah ad-Din Ayyubi, the Emirate of Haskif was a center of Kurdish governance for nearly three centuries. Kurdish was its official language, and its territory included Haskif, Amid (Diyarbakir), Jazira, and Siirt.

The emirate is remembered for its architectural and educational achievements, including the construction of bridges, mosques, schools, and palaces.

Name of the Emir	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Events
Emir Salih Najm al-Din Ayyubi I	1236–1239	Established emirate after decline of Artuqid power.
Emir Muazzam Kurdpasha	1239–1249	Consolidated Kurdish authority in the region.
Emir Mawhid Abdullah	1249–1270	Maintained stability and autonomy.
Emir Kamil Abu Bakr Sayf al-Din Shadi	—	Continued autonomous governance.
Emir Salih Najm al-Din Ayyubi II	1324–1325	Rebuilt city after Mongol invasions.
Ghazi Muhammad	1325–1364	Promoted education and culture.
Emir Adil Fakhr al-Din Sulayman	1364–1424	Long and stable reign, fostering scholarly activity.
Ashraf Ahmad	1424–1432	Maintained independence.
Kamil Babi Mahamid Khalil	1432–1452	Strengthened internal governance.
Emir Ahmad	1452–1455	Continued independence.
Khalaf ibn Muhammad	1455–1461	Defeated by Aq Qoyunlu Turks.
Emir Ayyubi III	1461–1462	Brief, unstable rule; followed by Aq Qoyunlu occupation.
Aq Qoyunlu Occupation	1462–1470	Massacres of Kurds; Uzun Hasan appointed Zayn al-Kurdi as governor.
Emir Khalil	1470–1500	Liberated Haskif; later captured by Safavids.
Emir Hasan	1500–1525	Internal conflicts led to defeat by Ottomans; massacres and annexation in 1525.

The city of Haskif

In 2020, the historic city of Haskif — with its ancient monuments and archaeological heritage — was deliberately flooded by Turkish authorities through the construction of the Ilisu Dam on the Tigris River, erasing yet another tangible link to Kurdish history.

3.5 – The Emirate of Botan in Northern Kurdistan (1271–1847 AD)

The Emirate of Botan was founded in 1271 AD by the noble Azizan family and ruled for 576 years, maintaining autonomy until its annexation by the Ottoman Empire in 1847. Its founder, **Abdulaziz Bukhti**, established control over the Botan region after the collapse of Zangid authority.

The Zangids — a Turko-Oghuz dynasty allied to the Seljuk Empire — had governed Aleppo, Qamishli, Mosul, Jazira, and Botan between 1127 and 1250 AD, before being dismantled by Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi. Nineteen years later, the Emirate of Botan emerged as a Kurdish-led polity.

The capital of the emirate was **Jazira**, and **Kurdish** served as the official language. The emirate's territories centered around Jazira and extended into the wider Botan region.

Name of the Emir	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Key Events
Abdulaziz Bukhti	1271–1338	Established the emirate after Zangid collapse; died of natural causes.
Izzaddin Bukhti	1338–1362	Consolidated power; engaged in conflicts with the Emir of Haskif.
Emir Izzaddin Abdal	1362–1398	Signed peace with Timur in 1394, but was attacked; temporary Timurid occupation followed by restoration of autonomy.
Bedirkhan Pasha	1821–1847	Initiated administrative and military reforms; led the Bedirkhan uprising against Ottoman encroachment. Defeated in 1847.
Izzaddin Sher Bey	1848–1855	Attempted to maintain autonomy after Bedirkhan's downfall; fully annexed by Ottomans in 1855.

The fall of the Botan Emirate was a decisive step in the Ottoman campaign to abolish the remaining Kurdish emirates and centralize control over Kurdistan.

3.6 – The Jalairid Turkic Dynasty (1336–1410 AD)

The Jalairid dynasty, though Turkic in origin, rose to prominence after the fall of the Ilkhanate in Kurdistan, Iraq, and western Iran. They ruled from **Baghdad** and **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, exerting influence over parts of Kurdistan. Their governance was marked by frequent internal rivalries and external threats from the Qara Qoyunlu.

Name of the Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Key Events
Hasan Buzurg	1336–1356	Established rule after Ilkhanate collapse.

Name of the Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Summary of Key Events
Shaykh Uways Jalayir	1356–1374	Expanded authority; defeated the Chupanids.
Shaykh Hasan	1374–1382	Maintained control but faced growing Qara Qoyunlu pressure.
Shaykh Husayn	1382–1384	Weak reign; quickly deposed.
Shaykh Ahmad	1382–1410	Defeated by Qara Qoyunlu; dynasty collapsed.

Map of the Rule of the Jalairid Turkic Dynasty

3.7 – The Rule of the Qara Qoyunlu ("Black Sheep" Turkmen Confederation) (1374–1468 AD)

The Qara Qoyunlu were an Oghuz Turkic confederation (Yiva branch) that migrated from Central Asia, ruling over **Kurdistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Anatolia, Iraq, Armenia**, and

parts of **Georgia** for 93 years. Persian was their administrative language, while their native tongue was Oghuz Turkish. They adhered to Sunni Islam.

Their rule was marked by repeated campaigns against Kurdish populations — including plunder, massacres, and the imposition of heavy taxes that reduced many Kurds to servitude or death.

Leader	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Capital**	**Summary of Events**
Bayram Khwaja	1374–1380	Mosul	Founded the confederation; led attacks on Kurdish tribes.
Qara Muhammad	1380–1389	Mosul	Continued hostilities toward Kurds; clashed with Timurids.
Qara Yusuf	1389–1420	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Declared independence from Timurids; expanded Turkmen control.
Iskandar	1420–1436	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Faced internal rivalries; deposed by Jahan Shah.
Jahan Shah	1436–1467	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Expanded realm over Kurdistan and beyond; defeated by Uzun Hasan at Chapakchur (1467).
Hasan Ali	1467–1468	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Final ruler; killed at Sedarah by Aq Qoyunlu forces.

Map of the Authority of the Qara Qoyunlu Turkic Dynasty

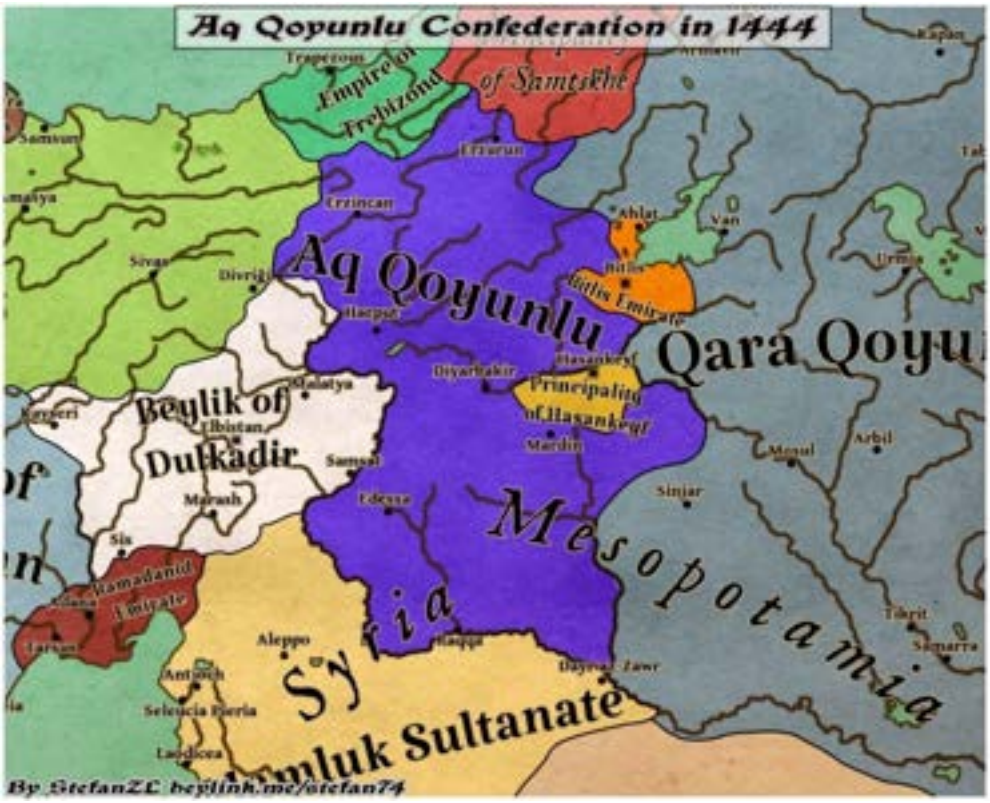
3.8 – The Rule of the Aq Qoyunlu ("White Sheep" Turkmen Confederation) (1378–1501 AD)

The Aq Qoyunlu — Oghuz Turks of the Bayandur tribe — ruled **Kurdistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Anatolia, Iraq, Armenia**, and parts of **Georgia** for 123 years. Like the Qara Qoyunlu, they spoke Turkish but used Persian in administration, and they adhered to Sunni Islam.

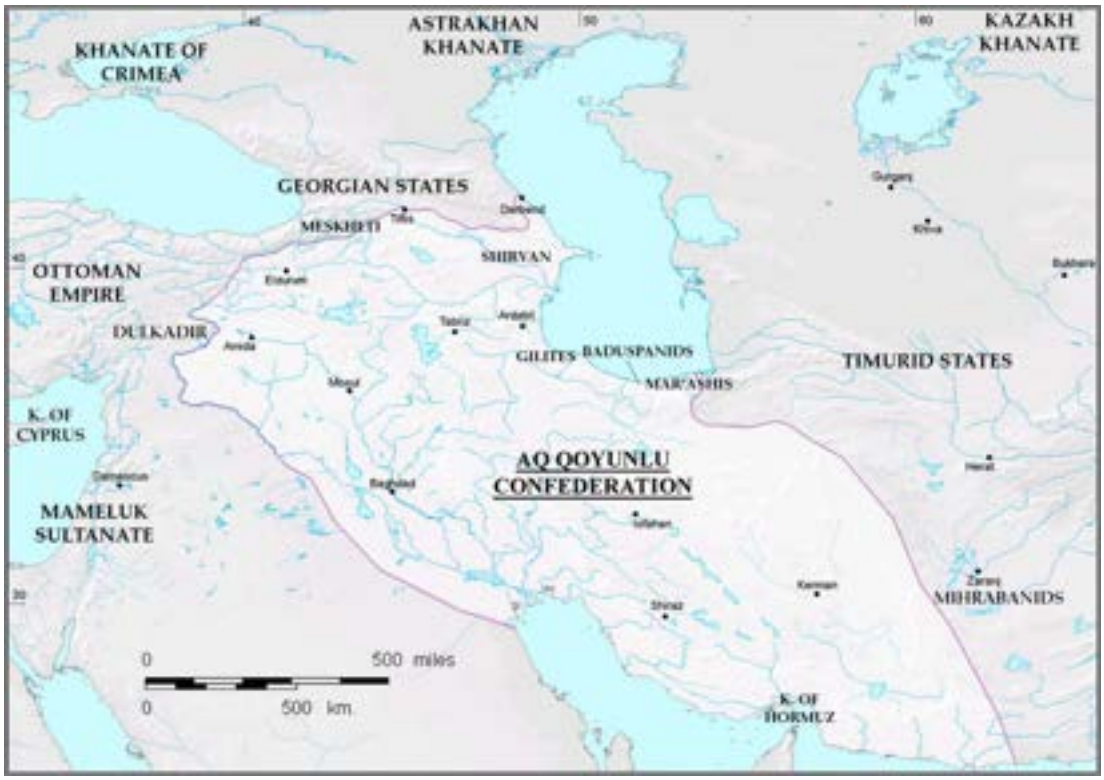
They carried out large-scale campaigns against Kurdish regions, seizing lands, imposing harsh taxes, and committing mass killings. Their rule ended in 1501 with defeat by Shah Ismail I, founder of the Safavid dynasty.

Leader	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Summary of Events
Tur Ali Beg	1378–1389	Diyarbakir	Founded confederation; allied with some Kurdish groups.

Leader	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Summary of Events
Fakhr al-Din Qutlu	1389–1420	Diyarbakir	Continued campaigns against Kurds.
Ahmad	1420–1434	Diyarbakir	Promoted Turkic culture; suppressed Kurdish influence.
Ali	1434–1435	Diyarbakir	Short reign; assassinated.
Hamza	1435–1444	Diyarbakir	Defeated by Uzun Hasan.
Uzun Hasan	1453–1478	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Defeated Qara Qoyunlu; expanded Aq Qoyunlu power.
Khalil Mirza	1478	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Brief rule; instability followed.
Yaqub Beg	1478–1490	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Stabilized realm after succession struggles.
Baysunghur	1490–1493	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Overthrown during civil conflict.
Rustam Beg	1493–1497	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Deposed by Ahmad Beg.
Ahmad Beg	1497–1499	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Weak reign; removed from power.
Alwand Mirza	1499–1501	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Defeated by Safavids; dynasty ended.



Map of Aq Qoyunlu Authority Between the Years 1467–1378 AD



The Territorial Map of Aq Qoyunlu Rule Between the Years 1467–1501 AD

Main Differences between Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu

Feature	Qara Qoyunlu	Aq Qoyunlu
Name Meaning	"Black Sheep" clan	"White Sheep" clan
Tribal Lineage	Oghuz Turks, Yiva branch	Oghuz Turks, Bayandur branch
Emergence	Early 14th century	Mid-14th century
Capitals	Tawrez (Tabriz)	Diyarbakir → Tawrez (Tabriz)
Strongest Ruler	Jahan Shah	Uzun Hasan
Territory	Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kurdistan	Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Caucasus
Alliances	Initially fought Timurids; later allied	Opposed both Timurids and Ottomans

---

3.9 – The Autonomous Kurdish Emirates (12th–19th Century AD)

During the era of **Aq Qoyunlu** and **Qara Qoyunlu** rule, several Kurdish principalities declared autonomy. Their relationship with these Turkmen confederations was fluid — alternating between alliances, subordination, and open conflict.

Major Kurdish Emirates

Emirate	Reign Period (AD)	Region	Language	Notes
Emirate of Sulaiman	1410–1838	Van, Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayazid	Kurdish (official & administrative)	Ruled for 428 years; annexed by the Ottoman

Emirate	Reign Period (AD)	Region	Language	Notes
				Empire in the 19th century.
Emirate of Zarrinal	1448–1610	Zarrinshahr, Shari-Kurd	Kurdish (official & administrative)	Ruled for 162 years; conquered by the Safavid Empire in the 17th century.

Other Notable Kurdish Leaders of the Era

- **Mustafa Beg** and **Darwish Beg** – Emirs from Van.
- **Urella Beg** and **Fattah Beg** – Emirs of Hakkari.
- **Khalid Beg Zahimi** and **Sharif Beg** – Emirs of Mush.
- **Hussein Beg** – Tribal leader in Qars and Ajar.
- **Pir Yusuf** – Emir of Zakho.
- **Pir Hama** – Emir of Mosul.

Many historical records relating to these emirates — like much of Kurdish heritage — were **looted, destroyed, or deliberately erased** by occupying powers. As a result, detailed accounts of rulers, governance, and events remain limited.

Map of the Independent Kurdish Principalities

3.10 – The Safavid Order and the Spread of Twelver Shiism (1252–1334 AD)

The **Safavid Order** was founded in Ardewel (Ardabil) by **Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardeweli**(1252–1334 AD), a renowned **Sunni Kurdish** religious leader who later adopted **Twelver Shiism** under heavy Turkic influence. Initially respected for his piety, Sheikh Safi transformed his order into a political-religious movement that rapidly spread among **Turkic Azerbaijani tribes** and Persian communities.

Although the Safavid family was of **Kurdish origin**, they adopted the **Turkish language** for political advantage and safety, presenting themselves as Turks in official matters while retaining Kurdish in private settings. This assimilation was part of a broader pattern in which many Kurdish families concealed their ethnic identity to avoid persecution.

The Safavids wore the distinctive **red felt cap** known as the *Tāj-e Ḥaydarī* ("Crown of Haidar"), which they claimed symbolized spiritual authority. Kurds, however, viewed them as adversaries and referred to them as **Qizilbash**.

Dynastic Ties with the Aq Qoyunlu

- **Uzun Hasan** (r. 1453–1478) married his sister to **Sultan Junayd** (descendant of Sheikh Safi).
- He gave his daughter Martha to **Sultan Haydar**, son of Sultan Junayd.
- These alliances later broke down into violent conflicts over territorial control in Kurdistan.

The Mausoleum of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardeweli in Ardewel (Ardabil) — now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** — contains his tomb, a mosque, and a library. Its intricate brickwork and calligraphy remain prime examples of Safavid-era craftsmanship.

3.11 – The Reign of Shah Ismail I Safavid (1501–1524 AD)

Shah Ismail I (r. 1501–1524) — a descendant of Sheikh Safi al-Din — founded the **Safavid Empire** at the age of 14, declaring **Shi'ism** as the state religion and using it to consolidate control over **Kurdistan** and **Iran**. His campaigns against the Kurds were marked by **extreme brutality**, mass executions, forced Turkification, and cultural suppression.

Administrative Structure

Ismail appointed seven Turkic Qizilbash tribes — Shamlu, Rumlu, Tekelu, Istajlu, Qajar, Afshar, and Zulkadar — as military commanders. These groups carried out systematic oppression in Kurdish lands.

Major Atrocities

- Massacres in Tawrez (Tabriz), Baghdad, Bitlis, and other Kurdish cities.
- Desecration of graves and sacred sites, including the remains of Abu Hanifa.
- Burning and public roasting of Kurdish prisoners to terrorize the population.
- Forced imposition of Turkish as the official language; Kurdish was banned.
- Confiscation of Kurdish lands and redistribution to Qizilbash settlers.

Kurdish Resistance

From 1515–1516, Kurdish leaders including **Mir Sharaf of Jazira Botan**, **Malik Khalil Ayyubi**, **Sheikh Hassan of Chamchamal**, and **Mir Seyf al-Din Mokri** liberated large areas of Kurdistan before being crushed by Ismail's forces.

Mir Seyf al-Din Mokri's Legacy

- Liberated Maragheh, Mahabad, Daryas (Naqadeh), and Salmas.
- Defeated major Qizilbash commanders such as Abdi Beg and Saro Ali Mihdari.
- His son, **Mir Sarm**, continued the struggle, temporarily capturing Tawrez (Tabriz) in 1514.

Ottoman Intervention

In 1514, Ottoman Sultan **Selim I** defeated Shah Ismail at the **Battle of Chaldiran**, marking a turning point in regional power. However, Kurdish autonomy remained precarious, as both Ottoman and Safavid forces committed atrocities against Kurdish leaders and populations.

By Ismail's death in 1524 (aged 37), Kurdistan was left **politically fragmented**, heavily garrisoned by Qizilbash troops, and subjected to strict Turkic cultural domination — yet pockets of **mountain-based Kurdish resistance** endured.

3.12 – The Battle of Chaldiran (1514 AD)

In the early 16th century, sectarian and political tensions between the **Ottoman Empire** and the **Safavid Empire** reached their peak. **Sultan Selim I** of the Ottomans, driven by staunch Sunni orthodoxy, viewed the **Shi'ite Qizilbash Turks** of the Safavids as dangerous heretics. For the **Kurds of northern Kurdistan**, long subjected to Qizilbash oppression, this confrontation presented an opportunity to liberate themselves.

By 1508, Kurdish leaders had appealed to **Sultan Bayezid II** of the Ottoman Empire for protection against **Shah Ismail I's** persecution. The Kurdish scholar **Hakim Idris Bitlisi** condemned the Qizilbash as followers of a false doctrine, while **Mir Sharafkhan of Bitlis** began organizing Kurdish resistance to reclaim **Bitlis**, **Diyarbakir**, **Jazira**, and **Hakkari**.

When Sultan Selim planned a campaign against the Safavids, an alliance was forged between the **Ottomans** and **Kurdish principalities**, ensuring Kurdish participation in the Ottoman advance.

The Campaign and the Battle

In 1514, Selim launched a massive invasion, with many Kurdish contingents, into **Wirme (Urmia)** and **Tawrez (Tabriz)**. Anticipating the attack, Safavid forces withdrew from **Erzincan**, **Amed (Diyarbakir)**, **Botan**, and **Hakkari** to defend Tawrez (Tabriz), burning towns and villages during their retreat to deny the Ottomans supplies.

On **23 August 1514**, the two armies met on the **plains of Chaldiran**, north of Wirme (Urmia). The Ottomans, with superior artillery and the backing of Kurdish forces, inflicted a decisive defeat on the Safavids and captured Tawrez (Tabriz). Several Kurdish regions were returned to local rulers.

Aftermath and Governance

- **Khan Mohammad Safavi**, governor of Diyarbakir, was killed; his brother **Qara Khan** replaced him.

- Governorships of **Bitlis** and **Jazira** were granted to **Ba'waz Beg** and **Alash Beg**.
- **Zahid Beg of Hakkari** was appointed overall governor of Kurdish principalities, including **Diyarbakir**, **Jazira**, **Bitlis**, **Hakkari**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Mokri**, and **Rostam Beg of Luristan**.

While the Kurdish emirates briefly gained autonomy, **Kurdistan became a perpetual battlefield** between the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Each side exploited Kurdish divisions, recruiting Kurds into their armies and forcing them into fratricidal conflict. The wars, fought under religious banners, devastated Kurdish lands and deepened internal fragmentation.

3.13 – The Mokriyan Principality (1500–1610 AD)

The **Mokriyan Principality** — also known as the Principality of Mokri — was a Kurdish polity that existed from the late 14th century until the 19th century, centered in eastern Kurdistan along the southern shores of **Lake Wirme (Urmia)**. Its core territories included **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))**, **Miyandoab (Duawan)**, **Mahabad**, **Bukan**, **Daryas (Naqadeh)**, and **Shno (Oshnavieh)**.

Notable Rulers

- **Sayf al-Din Mokri** (15th century): Expanded Mokriyan into **Suldouz**, **Dolbarik**, **Akhtachi**, and **Altamur** after defeating the Kabuklu tribal group. Unified the tribes later known collectively as "Mokri."
- **Sareem Mokri** (early 16th century): Defeated by Shah Ismail I in 1506; allied with the Ottomans in 1512. Divided his lands among three nephews (sons of Rostam).
- **Amir Beg I**: Ruled c. 30 years; balanced Ottoman alliances to counter Safavid influence.
- **Amir Beg II**: Liberated **Maraqa (Maragha)**, **Mosul**, **Hawler (Erbil)**, and **Babani** in 1583 with Ottoman support; recognized as *Beylerbey*.
- **Hasan Mokri**: Took power after Amir Beg II; internal family strife led to his death.

- **Alugh Beg**: Appointed governor of Daryas by the Ottomans after Hasan's death.
- **Sheikh Haidar** (early 17th century): Controlled **Daryas (Naghadeh)**, **Duwawan (Miyandoab)**, **Ardashir**, **Laylan**, **Malekan**, and several fortresses.
- **Qubad Khan Mokri**: Removed from office in 1609.
- **Budagh Sultan**: Last significant ruler; captured and executed by Shah Abbas I in 1610 after the fall of **Dimdim Castle**.

Decline and Turkification

Mokriyan's history was marked by **Ottoman–Safavid manipulation of Kurdish rivalries**, which repeatedly weakened its unity. In 1541, internal conflict among Kurds allowed the Ottomans to seize the principality without significant losses. By the early 17th century, Shah Abbas I forcibly deported large numbers of Kurds from **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Maraqa (Maragha)**, and **Wirme (Urmia)** to **Khorasan**, erasing much of the region's Kurdish demographic presence.

Before these events, **over 90% of Tawrez (Tabriz)'s population was Kurdish**, but massacres, displacement, and coerced assimilation led to widespread adoption of **Shi'a Turkic identity**. The Safavid conquest of Dimdim marked the end of Mokriyan's independence.

3.14 – The Turkic Demographic Transformation of Kurdistan (Early 1500s)

Until the **11th century AD**, **no Turkic presence existed south of the Caucasus**. Cities such as **Ganja**, **Baku**, **Shirvan**, **Nakhchivan**, **Lankaran**, **Ardewel (Ardabil)**, **Rebar (Rasht)** , **Lahijan**, **Ramswar (Ramsar)**, **Qezwan (Qazvin)**, **Zangiyan (Zanjan)**, **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Miyaneh**, **Maraqa (Maragha)**, **Khoy**, **Salmas**, **Maku**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Daryas (Naqadeh)**, and **Mahmudiyar** were entirely free of Turkic settlement. The demographic boundary between Kurds and Turks lay firmly in the **Caucasus Mountains**.

From the **11th to the 16th centuries**, Turkic migration increased — first through trade, then nomadism, and finally permanent settlement. By the mid-16th century, however,

over **90% of the population in Eastern Kurdistan** (now parts of Iran and Azerbaijan) was still Kurdish.

Safavid Assimilation and Ethnic Cleansing

The rise of the **Safavid dynasty** marked a turning point. Although of Kurdish origin, the Safavid rulers had been **Turkified** and implemented a systematic campaign to:

1. **Eliminate Kurdish political autonomy** by replacing Kurdish leaders with Turkic governors.
2. **Force Kurdish assimilation** into Turkic and Azeri identity, eroding Kurdish nationhood.
3. **Massacre and deport resisting populations**, compelling survivors to adopt Shi'ism and Turkic language.

Atrocities Under Shah Ismail I

Shah Ismail's campaigns from **Tawrez (Tabriz)** to **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Van**, **Diyarbakir**, **Nineveh**, **Hawler (Erbil)**, **Babani**, **Baghdad**, **Ardalan**, and **Luristan** involved mass killings, looting, and even **cannibalism of Kurdish prisoners** by Qizilbash forces. Skulls of victims were reportedly used as drinking cups. Many perpetrators were themselves **Kurdish by ancestry**, Turkified from childhood and indoctrinated into anti-Kurdish violence.

Entire Kurdish provinces — including **Baku**, **Nakhchivan**, **Ardewel (Ardabil)**, **Rebar (Rasht)** , **Lahijan**, **Ramswar (Ramsar)**, **Qezwan (Qazvin)**, **Zangiyan (Zanjan)**, and **Tawrez (Tabriz)**— were depopulated or linguistically assimilated. The Safavid state later deported thousands of Kurdish warriors to **Khorasan** to defend its frontiers against the Sunni Uzbek threat, further diluting Kurdish presence in their homeland.

By the early modern period, **vast stretches of Eastern Kurdistan had been Turkified**, laying the groundwork for later Azeri nationalist claims over historically Kurdish lands.

3.15 – The Reign of Shah Tahmasp I (1524–1576 AD)

Shah Tahmasp I, the son of **Shah Ismail I**, was of **Kurdish descent** on both his mother's and father's side. Despite this heritage, he identified as **Turkic** and regarded the **Kurdish nation** as an adversary.

Ruling the **Safavid Empire** from **1524 to 1576 CE**, his reign overlapped with that of **Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent** of the **Ottoman Empire** (**1520–1566 CE**). As rival powers, the two empires waged a **protracted struggle** lasting more than two decades. Every major battle was fought on **Kurdish soil**, leaving vast areas in ruins, killing **hundreds of thousands of Kurds**, and displacing many more from their homeland.

Between **1532 and 1534 CE**, **Sultan Suleiman**—assisted by Kurdish allies from both **Northern** and **Southern Kurdistan**—launched a campaign against **Baghdad**, seizing it from the **Turkic-Azeri Safavids**. Under his command, an **Ottoman army**—half of it Kurdish—invaded **Kurdistan**, capturing **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Ecbatana (Hamadan)**, and parts of **Kurdish territory** before turning toward **Baghdad**. Harsh winter conditions forced the Ottomans to retreat to **Istanbul**, leaving **Southern Kurdistan** behind.

Shah Tahmasp retaliated by launching attacks on **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, and **Van**, targeting the **Kurdish population**. His own brother, **Alqas Mirza**, later defected to the **Ottomans** and urged them to mount a fresh assault on **Tawrez (Tabriz)**. In **1548–1549 CE**, the Ottomans recaptured the city, but **Shah Tahmasp** resorted to **scorched-earth tactics**—destroying crops, food stores, and supplies—forcing the Ottomans to abandon their gains due to famine among their troops and lack of fodder for their horses.

Tahmasp then intensified his **campaign of repression** against the Kurds. In **1581 CE**, he sent forces into **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Mukriyan**, **Baban**, **Bilbas**, **Khoy**, **Ardish**, **Bargiri**, **Pasin**, **Van**, and **Mush**, ordering **mass killings**. Kurdish chieftains were **bound alive** and left in the snow to **freeze to death** as punishment for resisting **Safavid authority**.

Sultan Suleiman responded with a **third campaign**, but by this time, most pro-Ottoman Kurdish allies had been massacred, limiting Ottoman effectiveness. The stalemate culminated in the **Treaty of Amasya (1555 CE)**, which formally ended

hostilities. Under its terms, the **Safavid** and **Ottoman empires** partitioned **Kurdistan** between them, securing their respective control over its people and territories.

This treaty marked the **first official and permanent division of Kurdistan** between two foreign empires, with the **Kurdish people entirely excluded** from the decision-making process. Both powers thereafter collaborated in **suppressing Kurdish autonomy**.

3.16 – The Reign of Shah Ismail II (1576–1577 AD)

Following the death of **Shah Tahmasp I**, his son **Shah Ismail II** ascended to the **Safavid throne**. In contrast to his predecessors, **Ismail II** opposed the dominance of **Shi'ism** and openly supported **Sunni Islam**. He also expressed clear sympathy toward the **Kurdish population**, declaring that **Kurdish regions** should be governed by **Kurdish rulers** themselves.

This **pro-Kurdish stance**, along with his opposition to the entrenched **Shiite–Turkic elite**, quickly made him a political target. Within a year of taking power, he was **poisoned**—almost certainly at the hands of **Safavid court factions** who feared his reforms.

Notably, during his brief reign, **no wars or massacres** were carried out against the **Kurdish people**. His short-lived rule remains an **exception** in the long history of **Safavid oppression toward Kurdistan**.

3.17 – The Reign of Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh (1578–1587 AD)

After the death of **Shah Ismail II**, his brother **Mohammad Khodabandeh** assumed the **Safavid throne**. Due to his **blindness** and lack of **political skill**, real authority rested with his wife, **Khodabanda Begum**.

During this period, **Ottoman Turkish forces** launched fresh attacks on **Kurdish areas**, capturing **Salmas**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Mukriyan**, **Shno**, and **Bilbas**. **Khusraw Pasha**, the **Ottoman governor of Van**, used the **Kurdish population** of **Wirme (Urmia)** as a pretext to attack the **Turkic Safavids**. In response, **Kurdish tribes** across the affected regions

united and succeeded in retaking **Maku**, **Khoy**, **Salmas**, and **Wirme (Urmia)**, forcing the **Safavid Turks** to retreat to **Tawrez (Tabriz)**.

It is important to emphasize that all **Safavid rulers** adhered to the founding principles established under **Shah Ismail I**:

1. **The elimination of Kurdish political power.**
2. **The occupation and colonization of Kurdish lands.**
3. **The demographic transformation of Kurdistan.**
4. **The systematic replacement of Kurdish regional identities with the name "Azerbaijan."**

These policies were intensified under **Shah Abbas I**—himself of **Kurdish descent**—who became one of the most relentless enforcers of **Turkic nationalist** and **anti-Kurdish strategies**.

3.18 – The Reign of Shah Abbas I (1588–1629 AD)

Shah Abbas I, son of **Mohammad Khodabandeh**, ruled the **Safavid Empire** from **1588 to 1629 CE**. He is remembered as one of the most **ruthless rulers** of his era, infamous for his **cruelty** and **calculated brutality**. His empire stretched across **Iran**, **Kurdistan**, **Armenia**, **Atropatene** (*Azerbaijan, including Tawrez (Tabriz)and Wirme (Urmia)*), and **Georgia**.

Abbas reduced the power of the **Qizilbash tribal elite**, replacing them with a **disciplined standing army**. In **1598**, a **Kurdish man** from **Mukri** attempted to assassinate him with a **dagger** but failed. This event deepened **Abbas's hostility toward the Kurds** and solidified his **goal of their eradication**. Fearing further threats, he moved the **Safavid capital** from **Tawrez (Tabriz)**—predominantly Kurdish at the time—to **Isfahan**.

Although descended from **Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardeweli**, **Abbas** did not speak **Kurdish** and aligned himself culturally with **Persian identity**. He invested heavily in **Persian art and architecture**, commissioning landmarks such as the **Shah Mosque**, **Naqsh-e Jahan Square**, and the **Isfahan Bridge**. However, his political ideology remained deeply **Turkic-nationalist** in its **hostility toward the Kurds**.

Religious propaganda was a key weapon in this campaign. **Shiite clerics** branded **Sunni Kurds** as *infidels* and *apostates*, encouraging the public to view them as "the disbelievers mentioned in the Qur'an." These sermons fostered fear, leading many **urban Kurds** in **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Ardewel (Ardabil)**, **Rebar (Rasht)** , and **Ramswar (Ramsar)** to abandon their **identity** and adopt **Turkic language** and **customs** to avoid persecution.

In **1598**, **Abbas** waged war on **Shavardi**, prince of the **Atabeg Lur dynasty** in **Khorawa (Khorramabad)**. The battle ended in a **massacre** of **tens of thousands** of **Lur Kurds** and the total destruction of the **Khurshadi Principality**, which had ruled parts of **Kurdistan** and **eastern Mesopotamia** for over four centuries. Survivors were executed, **enslaved**, or **deported**. In **1602**, **Abbas** forcibly relocated **50,000 families** from **Chamishgazak** and **Lur tribes** to **Khorasan**, replacing them with **Turkic settlers** in their former lands.

3.19 – The Safavid Invasion of the Mir Khanate of Lepzerin (1610 AD)

Between **1600 and 1610 CE**, **Mir Khan of Lepzerin**—a former **Safavid commander**—rebelled and established an **independent Kurdish stronghold** at **Dimdim Fortress** near **Wirme (Urmia)**. His territory included **Soma**, **Bradost**, **Targawar**, **Margawar**, and the **Shikak region**.

Shah Abbas I ordered repeated **military campaigns** against **Mir Khan**. The first two assaults ended in **Safavid defeat**. In **1610**, **Abbas** assembled a **massive force** drawn from across the empire, including **Kurdish tribes** loyal to the **Qizilbash**. For three months, **fierce fighting** raged, with **Kurdish defenders** killing over **30,000 Safavid troops** but losing more than **20,000** of their own.

Eventually, the **Safavids** cut off **Dimdim's water supply**. Refusing to surrender, **Mir Khan** and his fighters—**men and women alike**—chose **death over capture**. Some **women** leapt from the **fortress walls** to avoid **enslavement**. **Mir Khan** fell in battle, after which **Abbas** ordered the **total extermination** of the **surviving Kurds**, the **enslavement** of their **children**, and the **settlement** of **Turkic families** in their lands.

This marked a **turning point** in **Wirme (Urmia)'s demographic transformation**, with **Turkish** replacing **Kurdish** as the **dominant language** under **severe penalties** for noncompliance.

3.20 – The Turkification and Persianization of Kurdish Lands by Shah Abbas I (1620 AD)

In **1620 CE**, **Shah Abbas I** implemented one of history's most **extensive demographic engineering projects** against the **Kurdish people**. He ordered the creation of a **100 km-wide**, **1,000 km-long belt** of **Turkic** and **Persian settlements** across prime **Kurdish lands**, stretching from **Ramswar (Ramsar)** on the **Caspian Sea** to **Shiraz** and **Genaveh** in the south.

This **settlement belt** was populated with **Turkic Afshars**, **Mongol tribes**, and **Persian Tajiks**, who were **armed** and **strategically positioned** between **Kurdish towns** to prevent **Kurdish unity**. The policy aimed to **erase Kurdish language**, **culture**, and **territorial integrity**—an objective that has left **permanent marks** on **Kurdistan's demographic map** into the **21st century**.

Among the **regions transformed** by this policy were **Ardewel (Ardabil)**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Mukriyan**, **Ardalan**, **Malamir (Malayer), Kirmashan**, **Khorawa (Khorramabad)**, **Kurdawa (Najafabad)**, and **Southern Sardasht**. Many **Kurdish dialects**, including the **Tati dialect** of **Zangiyan (Zanjan)**and **Qezwan (Qazvin)**, were **completely erased**, and their speakers **fully assimilated** into **Turkic** or **Persian identities**. Tragically, some of these **assimilated communities** later became **active agents** in **suppressing other Kurdish populations**.

This policy followed the **fall of Dimdim Fortress** and the **defeat of Mir Khan Lepzerin's forces**. **Tens of thousands** of **Kurds** were **massacred**; survivors were **deported** to **Khorasan** or **executed**. **Children** were taken to **military camps** for **forced Turkification**.

Qalib Ali Khan Afshar, leader of the **Afshar tribe**, relocated **8,000 Turkic families** to key **Kurdish cities—Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))**, **Ajabshir**, **Salmas**, **Maku**, **Khoy**, and **Wirme (Urmia)**—renaming **Kurdish districts** with **Turkish titles**. These settlers, **fiercely Shiite** and **hostile to Sunni Kurds**, were granted **full authority** to **seize Kurdish lands** and **suppress resistance**.

Through this **long-term strategy**, **Shah Abbas I** laid the **foundations** for the **permanent Turkification** and **Persianization** of **vast regions** of **Kurdistan**—a process that has **continued in various forms** for the past **four centuries**.

3.21 – Safavid Intrigue and the Blame Placed on the Kurds

Following the death of **Shah Tahmasp I** in **1576 AD**, his son **Haydar Mirza** assumed power. His reign, however, was **short-lived**; within **three months**, he was **assassinated** by members of his own family amid **bitter succession disputes**. His younger brother, **Ismail II**, was then proclaimed **Shah**. Determined to **secure his position**, **Ismail II** initiated a **ruthless purge**, executing **brothers**, **cousins**, and other **relatives**, as well as many **Turkish Qizilbash commanders**. Yet his reign was equally **brief**—lasting **less than a year**—before he was **poisoned** in a **conspiracy** orchestrated by his sister **Parikhan Khanum**, with the **cooperation** of the **Qizilbash**.

The throne then passed to **Mohammad Khodabandeh**, the **nearly blind** son of **Shah Tahmasp**, who was **installed** by the **Turkish Qizilbash**. Lacking **political skill** and **vision**, **Khodabandeh** delegated much of his authority to his wife, **Mahd-e Olya**. Her **first act** was to have **Parikhan Khanum** executed by the **Turkic commander Khalil Khan Afshar**.

The **Safavid state's authority** quickly **weakened**. **Uprisings** broke out across its territories, including **Kurdish rebellions** in **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Salmas**, and **Khoy**. The **Ottomans** seized the opportunity, launching **military campaigns** and **allying** with **Kurdish fighters**. In **1578 AD**, they captured **Kars**, the **Caucasus**, **Georgia**, and **Shirvan**. Both **Safavid** and **Ottoman armies** conscripted **Kurdish forces** for their **frontlines**, leading to the **deaths** of **tens of thousands** of **Kurds** and the **looting** of **Kurdish lands**.

Desperate, **Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh** sought **assistance** from **Amir Khan** of **Mosul**, **Mohammad Khan Istajlu** of **Armenia**, and **Imam Quli Khan Qajar** of **Karabakh**. **Internal rivalries** among them **prevented** any **coordinated defense**. When **Ottoman**

Sultan Murad III demanded the **cession** of **all Kurdistan** up to **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, negotiations **failed**, and the **Ottomans** took **Tawrez (Tabriz)** and the wider **Kurdish region**. In the ensuing fighting, **Kurdish forces** overthrew **Hossein Khan Khunoslu** in **Wirme (Urmia)** and killed **Mohammad Beg Rumlu** in **Khoy**, **liberating** both cities.

3.22 – Safavid Turkic Invasion of the Mokri Principality

The **Mokri family** ruled the **Mokriyan region**—covering **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))**, **Bukan**, **Mahabad**, **Daryas** (*Naqadeh*), and **Shno**—from the **fifteenth century onward**. In **1603 AD**, **Shah Abbas I** dispatched **Qizilbash forces** against them, triggering a **series of wars** that lasted until **1610 AD**. Over **20,000 Kurds** were **massacred**, and the region was **looted**.

Unable to capture the **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) fortress** by force, the **Safavids** lured the **Mokri ruler**, **Qobad Mokri**, with **promises of safety** in exchange for **loyalty**. When he and his followers approached the **royal camp unarmed**, they were **massacred** in **1629 AD**. **Qobad Mokri** was **killed**, survivors were **forcibly assimilated**, and his sister—celebrated for her **beauty**—was taken to **Shah Abbas's harem** in **Isfahan**.

Livestock, **goods**, and **thousands of captives** were **seized**; many were **executed** en route to **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, the rest **sold** or **converted** to **Turkic identity**. The **Safavid forces** carried out these **atrocities** under the **guise of religion**, labeling the **Kurds** as **infidels**. For the **Qizilbash**, it was a **triumph**; for the **Kurds**, it was a **tragedy of immeasurable loss**.

3.23 – The Reign of Shah Safi I (1629–1642 AD)

Safi I, **son of Shah Abbas I**, lacked his father's **military discipline** and spent much of his **reign** in **luxury**. Nonetheless, he **continued defensive wars** against the **Ottomans** and **Uzbeks**, dying a **natural death** in **1642 AD**.

3.24 – The Treaty of Zuhab (Qasr-e Shirin), 1639 AD

From the **Battle of Chaldiran** in **1514 AD** to **1639 AD**, the **Ottoman** and **Safavid Empires** waged repeated wars for control of **Kurdistan**. **Territories shifted** multiple times, bringing **devastation** to the **Kurdish population** through massacres, displacement, and economic ruin. The **Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin** in **1639 AD** marked a **permanent division** of Kurdistan: **Ardalan** came under **Safavid** rule, while **Mokriyan** and **Sharazur** were ceded to the **Ottomans**. Other **Kurdish principalities** retained **limited autonomy**, yet remained **trapped** in the rivalry between the two empires.

The Kurdish poet **Ahmadi Khani** (**1651–1707 AD**) eloquently expressed the **Kurdish plight**:

"From the **Arab frontier** to **Georgia**, Kurd has become a **tower**.
From **four sides**, besieged by **Rûm** and **Ajam**,
Their **arrows form iron walls**,
And **Kurdish blood flows** between the tides."

3.25 – The Reign of Shah Abbas II (1642–1666 AD)

More **capable** than his **predecessor**, **Shah Abbas II** nonetheless **failed** to bring the **distant Kurdish regions** under direct **Safavid control**. Key areas—including **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)**, **Mahabad**, **Bilbas**, and **Ardalan**—remained under the **authority of Kurdish rulers** until his death in **1666 AD**.

3.26 – The Reign of Shah Suleiman (1666–1694 AD)

Shah Suleiman (*son of Shah Abbas II*) pursued a **balance** between **military** and **diplomatic confrontations** with the **Ottoman Empire**, **Russia**, and various **Kurdish principalities**. He died of **natural causes** in **1694 AD**.

3.27 – The Reign of Shah Sultan Hossein (1694–1722 AD)

Shah Sultan Hossein's **weak and ineffective rule** ended in **1722 AD** when **Mahmud Hotaki**, the **Afghan leader**, captured **Isfahan**, thereby **toppling the Safavid dynasty**.

3.28 – Attempts to Revive the Safavid Empire (1729–1749 AD)

Safavid heirs — **Tahmasp II**, **Abbas III**, and **Mirza Sayyed Mohammad** — each attempted to **restore the empire**, but with **only limited success**. Ultimately, **all efforts failed**, marking the **definitive end** of **Safavid power** in **Iran** and **Eastern Kurdistan**.

3.29 – The Soran Principality (1570–1837 AD)

Founded by **Mir Sayid Saeedi** in **Rawanduz**, the **Soran Emirate** expanded across **Southern Kurdistan** but faced **constant pressure** from both the **Safavid** and **Ottoman empires**. Over the centuries, it was led by several rulers of note, most prominently **Mir Muhammad Beg** (**1783–1837 AD**), who **unified much of Southern and Eastern Kurdistan**, **modernized administration and the military**, and **resisted Ottoman–Qajar domination**.

Mir Muhammad's growing power alarmed both empires, prompting them—**backed by British, French, and Russian interests**—to **jointly destroy the emirate** in a **brutal campaign** that killed **over 10,000 Kurds**. Betrayed by **deceitful peace overtures**, Mir

Muhammad was captured in **1836 AD** and **vanished in Ottoman custody**. The **fall of Soran** reinforced the enduring Kurdish adage: *"The Kurds have no friend but the mountains."*

3.30 – The Ardalan Principality (1590–1868 AD)

The **Ardalan dynasty** was a **Kurdish principality** that ruled from the **14th century** until its dissolution in the **1860s AD**. It governed the region of **Ardalan** and **Sharazur**, roughly corresponding to parts of today's **Kurdistan**, **Sulaymaniyah**, and **Halabja** provinces. The ruling family, known as the **House of Bani Ardalan**, claimed descent from **Ardashir I**, the founder of the **Sassanid Empire**. The principality's original capital was **Sharazur**, later moved to **Sanandaj** (*Sine*), which remained its administrative center until the end of its rule.

Notable Rulers of the Ardalan Principality:

- **Halo Khan Ardalan** (*1590–1616 AD*) – One of Ardalan's most powerful rulers, he maintained autonomy under both **Safavid** and **Ottoman** suzerainty, governing much of present-day **Kurdistan province**.
- **Khan Ahmad Khan Ardalan** (*1617–1637 AD*) – Son of Halo Khan, held as a political hostage at the **Safavid court** in **Isfahan** during his youth to secure loyalty. Married **Zarin Kola**, daughter of **Shah Abbas I**. After his son was blinded on the orders of **Shah Safi**, Khan Ahmad turned against the Safavids but was eventually defeated and died in 1637.
- **Suleiman Khan Ardalan** (*1637–1657 AD*) – Cousin of Khan Ahmad; founded the city of **Sanandaj** in 1636. Following the **Treaty of Zuhab** (*1639*), the western half of Ardalan's territory—including **Sulaymaniyah**, **Halabja**, and **Sharazur**—was ceded to the **Ottomans**. Later dismissed by **Shah Abbas II** and exiled to **Mashhad**.

- **Khosrow Khan Ardalan** (*1680–1682 AD*) – Remembered for his brutality and disregard for his people; executed by **strangulation** in **Isfahan** under Safavid orders.
- **Reza Qoli Khan Ardalan** (*1834–1848 AD*) – Son of **Khosrow Khan III**; ruled during the **Qajar era**, initially under the regency of his mother. Reduced taxation to gain public support and worked to control rebellious tribal areas. Died in **Taran (Tehran)** in **1864**.

Throughout its existence, the **Ardalan Principality** faced continuous challenges, including **invasions by rival Kurdish dynasties** and pressure from the **Safavid**, **Zand**, and **Qajar** states. Between **1865 and 1868 AD**, the **centralizing policies** of the **Qajar dynasty** dissolved Ardalan's autonomy. The last ruler, **Amanollah Khan Ardalan**, was appointed directly by the Qajar administration, marking the **end of self-rule**.

3.31 – The Kurossi Principality in Luristan (1590–1715 AD)

The **Kurossi Principality** was a **Kurdish polity** in **Luristan** that ruled the **southern Zagros Mountains** from the late **16th century** to the early **18th century**. Its territory spanned parts of present-day **Eastern Kurdistan**, including **Luristan**, **Kermanshah**, and **Ilam**. The principality emerged during a **power vacuum** as the **Aq Qoyunlu** struggled to maintain control over the **Zagros highlands**.

Established through **tribal alliances**, Kurossi asserted **open resistance** to **foreign imperial domination**. Its capital was the **fortress of Kuros**, in present-day **Kuhdasht, Luristan**. Like many Kurdish principalities of the era, it was built upon **hereditary tribal authority**, a **pastoral economy**, **religious pluralism**, and **internal cohesion**. It engaged in **defensive diplomacy** and **tactical negotiations** with the **Safavid** and **Ottoman** empires.

Though ultimately destroyed in the early **18th century** by repeated **Safavid military campaigns**, its **legacy** strengthened the **national identity** of the Kurds of Luristan. **Shah Abbas I** launched several invasions, but when military conquest failed, he

deployed **Shi'ite propaganda** to weaken local faith structures. At the time, most inhabitants of **Luristan**, **Ecbatana (Hamadan)**, **Kermanshah**, and **Ilam** followed the **Ahl-e Haqq (Yarsani)** faith and spoke **Kurdish**, particularly the **ancient Ilami dialect**.

Under **Mir Hêmin of Kurosi**, the principality faced its final Safavid onslaught. Though **Safavid central authority** was waning, **Turkic** and **Persian Shi'ite forces** exploited the situation, driven by **ethnic hostility** toward the Kurds. They **destroyed the Kurosi fortress** and **massacred its Kurdish population**. **Mir Hêmin** fought until his death in battle.

Following the fall, **Azeri Turks** and **Persian Shi'ites** seized control of the region, carrying out **massacres** against **non-Shi'ite Kurds** and **plundering their properties**. Those who refused **conversion to Shi'ism** were executed. Across **Kuhgiluyeh**, **Bakhtiari**, **Anshan (Shiraz)**, **Ecbatana (Hamadan)**, **Luristan**, **Reyshar (Bushehr)**, **Khuzestan**, **Ilam**, and **Kermanshah**, Kurds were forcibly converted, and **Persian** and **Arabic** were imposed as dominant languages.

During the **Safavid era** and successive invasions, **thousands of Kurdish families** were forcibly relocated to **Karaj**, **Khorasan**, **Tehran**, **Zahedan**, and other parts of the empire.

Notable Rulers of the Kurossi Principality:

Ruler Name	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Religion**	**Notable Event During Rule**
Mir Xalid Kurossi	1590–1615	Yarsani (Ahl-e Haqq)	Led resistance against **Safavid centralization** under **Shah Abbas I**
Mir Yusif Kurossi	1615–1640	Yarsani	Signed **semi-autonomous treaty** with the **Safavid court** in exchange for **military service**
Mir Şerko Kurossi	1640–1672	Yarsani	Supported **Sunni tribal alliance** against **Shi'ification campaigns** by Safavid **ulama**

Ruler Name	Reign Period (AD)	Religion	Notable Event During Rule
Mir Khosrew Kurossi	1672–1690	Yarsani	Defeated a **rival Kurdish clan** allied with the **Ottomans**; consolidated **local control**
Mir Hêmin Kurossi	1690–1715	Yarsani	Resisted **Safavid invasion**; principality **destroyed**, mass **massacres** and **forced conversions** followed

---

3.32 – The Rule of the Baban Principality (1670–1850 AD)

Following the **defeat and withdrawal of the Safavids** from **southern Kurdistan** in **1670 AD**, **Sulayman Beg Baban** assumed control over the **Baban region**. The **Ottoman Empire** officially recognized him with the title **"Pasha of Baban."** At this time, the principality encompassed **Sulaymaniyah** and **Khanaqin**, most of which consisted of villages and was administratively referred to as **Sharazur**.

The Babans bordered the **Ardalan Principality** to the **east**, whose territory included **Sanandaj**, **Mariwan**, **Baneh**, **Saqqez**, and both **Hawraman** regions. Before the formation of the Baban Principality, this territory was under Ardalan control. Consequently, for nearly a decade after its establishment, the Babans and Ardalans engaged in **continuous military clashes** over borders and political dominance.

To the **west**, the Babans neighbored the **Soran Principality**, whose capital alternated between **Rawanduz** and **Hawler (Erbil)**—both strongholds firmly under Soran control.

In **1678 AD**, **Sulayman Shah Baban** traveled to **Constantinople (Istanbul)**, securing **formal Ottoman recognition** of his rule and guaranteeing **hereditary succession** for his family.

At the time, the region's principal tribes were the **Nuradinis**, the **Jaf**, and the **Ghawareh**. In **1690 AD**, **Emir Sulayman Beg Baban** launched a campaign against **Dilawar Pasha of Kirkuk**, capturing his fortress and killing him in battle. This expanded Baban control over **Sharazur** and **Kirkuk**.

In **1697 AD**, Sulayman Beg turned his forces against **Mir Mohammad Khan**, son of **Khosrow Khan of Ardalan**. After a decisive victory, he annexed **Mariwan**, **Saqqez**, and **Hawraman**. During this campaign, **Tamurkhan Beg** (governor of Saqqez) and **Ibrahim Beg** (governor of Mariwan) were both killed. This war was fought over **gold, treasures, and political dominance**. With the capture of **Kirkuk** and **Mariwan fortresses**, Sulayman Baban amassed significant wealth and raised a powerful army.

However, **Abbas Qoli Khan Qajar** later sent **10,000 troops** to support the Ardalan prince. A major battle erupted in **Mariwan**, lasting several days and resulting in **thousands of Kurdish casualties** on both sides. Sulayman Baban was ultimately defeated and retreated to **Sharazur**.

Using the war as a pretext, Abbas Qoli Khan Qajar **massacred 1,500 Kurds** in Ardalan, accusing them of failing to resist the Babans. He constructed a grim monument of severed heads, remembered among the Kurds as **"Kuley Kolên"** (*The Skull Tower*).

Soon after, the Ottomans appointed **Hasan Pasha** as **governor of Baghdad**. Hostile toward the Kurds, Hasan Pasha invaded **Kirkuk**, **Khanaqin**, and **Sharazur** with the backing of the governors of **Aleppo** and **Diyarbakir**. He killed **Sulayman Pasha** and **seventeen senior Baban commanders**.

At the same time, **Hussein Khan Lur** of the Qajar forces advanced toward **Sharazur**, pushing Kurdish communities as far as the **Qandil Mountains**.

Rulers of the Baban Principality

No.	Name	Reign Period (AD)
1	Khan Muhammad Pasha	1721–1731

No.	Name	Reign Period (AD)
2	Khalid Pasha	1732–1742
3	Salim Pasha	1742–1754
4	Suleiman Pasha	1754–1765
5	Muhammad Pasha	1765–1775
6	Abdullah Pasha	1775–1777
7	Ahmad Pasha	1777–1780
8	Mahmoud Pasha	1780–1782
9	Ibrahim Pasha	1782–1803
10	Abdulrahman Pasha	1803–1813
11	Mahmoud Pasha	1813–1834
12	Suleiman Pasha	1834–1838
13	Ahmad Pasha	1838–1847
14	Abdullah Pasha	1847–1850

Between **1723 and 1746 AD**, the Babans took part in **Ottoman–Qajar wars**, siding with the **Ottoman Empire**. From **1750 to 1847 AD**, in alliance with Ottoman forces, they waged **several campaigns** against rival Kurdish principalities, including **Soran** and **Botan**.

In **1781 AD**, **Mahmud Pasha Baban** founded the **city of Sulaymaniyah**, making it the new Baban capital in place of **Qalacholan Fortress**.

The last ruler, **Abdullah Pasha Baban**, reigned for only three years. In **1847 AD**, he suffered defeat against the Ottomans near **Koy Sanjaq (Koya)**. Following this loss, **Sharazur** and **Sulaymaniyah** were brought under **direct Ottoman administration**, ending the **Baban Principality**.

3.33 – The Safavid Turks' Attack on the Emir of Bilbas (1693 AD)

After the **suppression of the Bradosti Kurdish tribes** in **Wirme (Urmia)**, the **Safavid Turks** turned their attention to the **Bilbas region**—a powerful Kurdish tribal confederation controlling **Piranshar**, **Sardasht**, **Qaladze**, **Ranya**, **Chwarqurna**, **Khalifan**, **Soran**, **Rawanduz**, and **Choman**. The Bilbas confederation comprised six principal clans: **Mangur**, **Mamash**, **Piran**, **Suesen**, **Ako**, and **Balak**.

In **1693 AD**, the Turkic Afshar commander **Khodabegi** launched a major campaign against the **Emir of Bilbas**, massacring thousands in **Piranshar** and **Sardasht**. A second offensive followed in **1721 AD**, forcing the Bilbas to retreat toward the **Qandil Mountains**. The Turks pursued them but found the terrain too treacherous for battle and began to withdraw. During the retreat, the Bilbas Kurds mounted a **counterattack**, killing many Turkish soldiers, reclaiming plunder, and forcing the enemy back toward **Wirme (Urmia)**. In this engagement, **Khodabegi Afshar** himself was killed.

At this time, the mountainous corridor between **Wirme (Urmia)** and **Shino** was under the control of the **Emir of Zerza**, preventing further Turkish advances. Although both the Bilbas and Zerza Kurdish emirates resisted the Safavids, they failed to form a united front against the expanding **Turkic Azerbaijani powers**.

The leader of the Bilbas during this period was **Bapir Agha**. In **1783 AD**, he and **1,000 followers** were lured to **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))** under false pretenses of alliance with the **Azerbaijani Afshar Turks**. Once inside the city, they were betrayed and massacred—a severe blow to Bilbas leadership and unity.

3.34 – The Afghan Invasion and the Fall of the Safavid Empire (1709–1722 AD)

In **1709 AD**, **Mirwais Hotaki**, an Afghan chieftain, rose in revolt against Safavid rule in **Kandahar**. After a bloody battle, he declared **Afghanistan independent**.

In **1722 AD**, his son **Mahmud Hotaki** led an Afghan army westward toward **Isfahan**, defeating **Sultan Hossein Safavi** and ending the **Safavid Empire**. Declaring himself **King of Iran and Afghanistan**, Mahmud Hotaki referred to his domain as the **"Empire of Persia"**—the first historical instance of a state formally adopting the name *Persia* (*Fars*). Prior to this, victorious rulers typically named their realms after themselves or their dynasties.

3.35 – The Afsharid Turkic Dynasty in Iran and Eastern Kurdistan (1736–1796 AD)

In **1736 AD**, **Nader Afshar**, a Turkic military commander, capitalized on internal instability and enlisted **skilled Kurdish warriors** to expel the Afghans to **Kandahar**, defeating **Mahmud Hotaki**. Crowned as **Shah**, he founded the **Afsharid Dynasty** in **Iran** and **Eastern Kurdistan**.

Shortly thereafter, **Mohammad Isa Afshar** of **Wirme (Urmia)** sought Nader Shah's help against the **Bilbas Kurds** of **Lajan** and **Qandil**. Nader dispatched a large force under **Nasrollah Mirza** and his brother **Ibrahim Zuhair al-Dawla** to join Mohammad Isa's troops near **Saqqez**. The Bilbas, with **only 2,000 fighters**, faced a **20,000-strong Afshar army**. The battle left **500 Kurds dead**, another **500 wounded**, and the survivors retreating to the **Qandil Mountains**.

The Afshar forces then carried out **massacres in Piranshar and Sardasht**. Meanwhile, Nader Shah personally led campaigns into **Sayin Qala**, **Baneh**, and **Bardarash**, executing resisting Kurds and forcing captives into military labor.

The **Bilbas lands**, rich in **livestock**, **gold**, and **jewels**, and situated in **strategic mountain terrain**, became a target of Afshar ambition. Across Iran, **Azerbaijani Turkic Afshar governors** in **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))**, **Wirme (Urmia)**, and Kurdish cities engaged in corruption, extortion, and looting, consolidating power through bribery and intimidation.

In **1764 AD**, the **Bilbas** and **Zerza** tribes united to drive Turkish forces from **Piranshar**, **Shino**, and the **Demdemi fortress**. However, renewed Afshar offensives followed. **Rostam Khan** of **Wirme (Urmia)** advanced on **Lajan**, while **Moemen Khan** of **Sayin Qala** attacked **Shino**. In the battles that followed, **Kabazi** (Bilbas) and **Mohammad Beg Qarahaasanlu** (Bilbas) were killed.

Unable to prevail militarily, the Turks resorted to **political manipulation**, exploiting divisions among Kurdish tribes. For example, when the **Dumbuli Kurds of Tawrez (Tabriz)** rebelled against **Najaf Qoli**, the Turkish governor of Tawrez (Tabriz), **Imam Qoli Afshar** of Wirme (Urmia) convinced several Kurdish leaders—including **Sheikh Ali Khan Mukri** (Saqqez), **Jafar Sultan Zerza** (Shino), **Qarani Agha Gawra** (Bilbas), and **Mirza Agha Shikaki**—to join him against the Dumbuli. In **1780 AD**, fighting in the Kurdish districts of Tawrez (Tabriz) resulted in **thousands of Kurds killing each other**.

That same night, Najaf Qoli betrayed his Kurdish allies, murdering **Ahmad Agha Muqaddami** (a prominent Bilbas leader) and **Haji Agha** (commander of Maraqa). The Afshars then elevated Ahmad Agha's son to the governorship of Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) and used him to lure **Bapir Agha Manguri** into an ambush at Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) in **1783 AD**. There, **Bapir Agha and 1,000 Bilbas horsemen** were massacred.

The Afshars further manipulated Kurdish politics by arranging a marriage alliance between **Mohammad Qoli Khan Afshar** and the **Zerza clan**. In **1786 AD**, he mobilized **Shikaki** and **Zerza** forces to attack the Bilbas in **Piranshar** and **Sardasht**. The Bilbas, led by **Qarani Agha**, were defeated at **Chomi Lawen** and forced to flee to **Qandil**. Even **Budagh Khan Mukri** of Mahabad, who had sided with the Turks in plundering the Bilbas, was later betrayed—robbed of his assets and forced to return home **wounded and on foot**.

Rulers of the Afsharid Dynasty (1736–1796 AD)

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Major Events
Nader Shah Afshar	1736–1747	- Conquered Afghanistan, India, and Central Asia. - 1731–1732: Defeated the Kurds of Mahabad and Sanandaj. - 1733: Subjugated the Kurds of Mokri, Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)), and Wirme (Urmia). - 1743–1745: Attacked Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk, massacring civilians. - 1743–1746: Attacked Hawler (Erbil) and Mosul, committing mass killings. - Assassinated in 1747 by his own officers.
Adel Shah	1747–1748	- Relative of Nader Shah. Deposed in 1748 by his brother Ibrahim Afshar. - Strangled in Mashhad in 1749 on his brother's orders.
Ibrahim Afshar	1748	- Ruled for only a few months before being overthrown.
Shahrokh Shah	1748–1796	- Grandson of Nader Shah. Defeated in Khorasan by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar. - Blinded with molten lead to force disclosure of royal treasures. - Eventually tortured to death.

3.36 – The Kurdish Zand Dynasty in Eastern Kurdistan (1751–1794 AD)

Following the assassination of **Nader Shah Afshar**, the Turkic ruler of Iran, **Karim Khan Zand**—an ethnic Kurd from **Malamir** (Malayer) in Kurdistan—rose in rebellion. In **1751 AD**, he established the **Kurdish Zand Dynasty**, whose authority extended over **Shiraz,**

Isfahan, Ecbatana (Hamadan), Kurd (Krd) City, Kirmashan, Ilam, Lurestan, Malamir (Malayer), and **Khuzestan**. Shiraz became the dynasty's capital, and **the Kurdish language was adopted as the official administrative language**.

Karim Khan's reign (1751–1779 AD) was marked by stability and wise governance. Upon his death in **1779 AD**, his son **Abdul Fattah Khan Zand** succeeded him, but was deposed after only three months by his uncle **Mohammad Ali Khan Zand**.

Mohammad Ali Khan's rule lasted just one month before he was assassinated by his brother **Sadiq Khan Zand**, who reigned from **1779 to 1799 AD**. Sadiq Khan's poor leadership left the Zands vulnerable to the rising **Qajar Turks**.

In **1781 AD**, **Ali Murad Khan Zand** assumed power but lost much of the dynasty's territory due to internal divisions and military defeats. **Ja'far Khan Zand** (1785–1789 AD) sought to consolidate Zand power and resolve Kurdish disputes, but faced relentless military pressure from **Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar**.

The dynasty's final ruler, **Lotf Ali Khan Zand** (1789–1794 AD), grandson of Karim Khan, was a skilled and courageous commander. Yet the Qajars, through calculated political manipulation, incited key Kurdish regions—**Tawrez (Tabriz), Ardewel (Ardabil), Zangiyan (Zanjan), Qezwan (Qazvin), and Ardalan**—to turn against him. Defeated, Lotf Ali Khan fled from **Kerman** toward **Bam**, where he was betrayed by a local Persian family, captured, and taken to Tehran. In **1794 AD**, after brutal torture, he was executed by **Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar**, ending the Kurdish Zand Dynasty.

Rulers of the Kurdish Zand Dynasty

Ruler	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Capital / Regions Controlled**	**Key Events**
Karim Khan Zand	1751–1779	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Isfahan, Kerman, Tehran, Kurdistan, Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Founder of the dynasty; ruled with wisdom and stability; died of illness.

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital / Regions Controlled	Key Events
Abdul Fattah Khan Zand	1779	Same as above	Deposed by uncle Sadiq Khan; blinded; replaced by cousin Mohammad Ali Khan.
Mohammad Ali Khan Zand	1779	Same as above	Killed by his own family's commanders.
Sadiq Khan Zand	1779	Same as above	Assassinated by relatives.
Ali Murad Khan Zand	1781–1785	Same as above	Killed in battle against Qajar forces.
Ja'far Khan Zand	1785–1789	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Successful in several campaigns but assassinated by his own guards.
Lotf Ali Khan Zand	1789–1794	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Defeated by Qajars; captured and tortured to death.

3.37 – The End of Afshar Turkic Rule and the Rise of the Qajar Turks (1797 AD)

In **1796 AD**, **Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar** defeated **Shahrokh Shah Afshar** in **Khorasan**, ending the Afsharid dynasty and establishing **Qajar rule** over Iran. To secure his position, he moved on **Wirme (Urmia)**, deposed **Mohammad Qoli Khan Afshar**, and replaced him with **Qasim Khan**, Mohammad Qoli's brother and a Kurd.

The Qajars used the **Zerza tribe's protection** of Mohammad Qoli Khan as a pretext for military action. **Afrasiab Sultan** of Zerza sought aid from the **Bilbas** and **Harki** Kurds,

while Qasim Khan Afshar allied with **Dumbuli** and **Mokri** Kurds against the Zerza. The Mokri, recalling past Turkish betrayals, secretly joined the Zerza to avoid fratricidal conflict.

A **three-pronged Kurdish assault** in 1797 defeated the Turkish offensive against Shno, killing thousands of Turkic Afshar troops and Dumbuli Kurds. Mohammad Qoli Khan Afshar was reinstated as ruler of Wirme (Urmia). However, during a later visit to congratulate his son-in-law, Afrasiab Sultan was **betrayed and murdered** in Wirme (Urmia).

In **1799 AD**, the **Bilbas Kurds**, with allied Shno tribes, captured **Wirme (Urmia) Fortress**. Qajar prince **Abbas Mirza** retaliated, sending **Hussein Qoli Khan Afshar** and **Ahmad Khan Moqaddami** of Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)), supported by **Zerza, Shikak, and Shamsdinan** Kurds, to destroy the Bilbas.

On **June 22, 1801**, equal-sized Kurdish and Turkish forces clashed on the **Lajan Plain**. Despite fierce resistance, betrayal by Wirme (Urmia) and Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) Kurds caused the Bilbas to retreat to **Qandil**. The victors massacred the population, constructing **minarets from severed heads** at **Sheikh Aysh** and **Ser Bastu**, and sent the heads of Bilbas leaders on six black horses as trophies to **Fath Ali Shah**.

The **Qarapapaq Turks** were later settled on Bilbas lands in **Salduz**, displacing the Kurds. From **1815–1816**, renewed raids killed thousands more, and the Bilbas lost all territorial control. Survivors dispersed to **Qandil, Halgurt, Sharazur, Pshdar, Bitwen, Hawler (Erbil)**, and **Mosul**.

3.38 – The Bedir Khan Revolt (1821–1847 AD)

In the early 19th century, **Bedir Khan Pasha** of Botan sought to unite the Kurdish emirates through the **"Holy Pact"**, a political-military alliance aimed at expelling **Ottoman forces** and establishing an independent Kurdistan. The **Ardalan principality** of Eastern Kurdistan joined the pact, and Bedir Khan secured alliances with **Assyrian**

and **Armenian** communities. However, British diplomatic pressure led the Assyrians and Armenians to withdraw before the uprising began.

In **1821 AD**, Bedir Khan launched his revolt, liberating **Jazira** and **Botan** and expanding into **Van, Wirme (Urmia), Mukriyan, Soran, Mosul, Sinjar**, and **Nineveh**. He contacted numerous Kurdish leaders, including:

- **Mustafa Beg** and **Darwish Beg** (Van)
- **Ural Beg** and **Fattah Beg** (Hakkari)
- **Khalid Beg Zahimi** and **Sharif Beg** (Mush)
- **Hussein Beg** (Qars and Ajar)
- **Pir Yousif** (Zakho)
- **Pir Hamid** (Mosul)

Bedir Khan established a **weapons factory** in Jazira, sent students to Europe for military training, and began building a **naval force** in Van.

The Ottomans, under **Omar Pasha** and with **British support**, mounted a campaign to crush the revolt. The first major battle near **Wirme (Urmia)** was a Kurdish victory. However, Bedir Khan's cousin and commander, **Izz al-Din Sher (Yezdan Sher)**, defected to the Ottomans, fatally undermining the resistance.

Although Kurdish forces briefly retook Jazira, the Ottomans recaptured it with Yezdan Sher's aid. Bedir Khan retreated to **Eruh Fortress**, holding out for **eight months** under siege before starvation and exhaustion forced his surrender.

Exiled first to **Istanbul** and later **Damascus**, Bedir Khan died in **1869**, reportedly poisoned by the Ottomans. He was buried in the Kurdish cemetery of Damascus. Notably, during his rule, he issued a **Kurdish currency** called the *Gala*, used within his territories.

3.39 – The Governorship of Kurdistan (Sne Province) in 1867 AD

In **1867 AD**, **Farhad Mirza**, son of **Abbas Mirza** of the Qajar Turks, was appointed by **Naser al-Din Shah Qajar** as governor of **Kurdistan** (Sne Province). He was granted sweeping powers to suppress the Kurdish population of the Ardalan region, including the authority to execute and carry out massacres without restriction.

At this time, **Hassan Sultan Hawrami** served as governor of **Hawraman** and **Ardalan**. Commanding thousands of experienced fighters, Hassan Sultan represented a formidable obstacle to Qajar control. Knowing he could not defeat him in open battle, Farhad Mirza resorted to deception.

He invited Hassan Sultan to the **mosque of Bilkeh** near **Mariwan**, ostensibly to honor him with gifts. Once inside a nearby coffeehouse, Hassan Sultan was assassinated. With his death, Qajar forces swiftly overwhelmed his followers, massacring most of the Kurdish warriors in the region.

Farhad Mirza then turned against the **Jaf Kurds**. Launching a surprise operation, he surrounded their stronghold and captured six leaders, including **Ali Shah**, after they refused to submit to Qajar rule. In a brutal act intended to terrorize the Kurdish population, all six were buried alive in a single mass grave.

3.40 – The Assassination of Jaf‘ar Agha of the Shikak in 1867 AD

The Qajar Turks maintained a policy of unrelenting violence against the **Shikak Kurds**. **Ali Agha Shikak** had earlier been tortured and executed in a Qajar prison in Tawrez (Tabriz). His son, **Muhammad Agha Shikak**, maintained a semi-independent existence in the mountainous zones of **Salmas, Khoi,** and **Wirme (Urmia)**, away from direct Qajar control.

Jaf‘ar Agha, son of Muhammad Agha, later built a strong Kurdish fighting force from among the Shikak tribes, drawing the suspicion of the Qajar authorities. In **1867 AD**,

Mohammad Ali Mirza, a Qajar military commander, invited Jaf‘ar Agha to Tawrez (Tabriz), swearing a **Quranic oath of safety**.

Upon his arrival at Mohammad Ali Mirza’s palace, Jaf‘ar Agha was shot dead by a Turkish guard in the reception hall. His body, along with those of two Kurdish bodyguards, was left unburied and exposed for seven days in the Kurdish quarters of Tawrez (Tabriz)—an act designed to intimidate the local Kurdish population.

3.41 – The Rule of the Bilbas Principality (1713–1873 AD)

The **Bilbas Principality** was one of the most influential Kurdish powers of its era, controlling the entire regions of **Lajan, Mangur, Piran, Balakan, Pishdar,** and **Bitwen**—territories encompassing modern **Khane (Piranshar), Sardasht, Qaladze, Ranya, Chwar Qurna, Soran,** and **Rawanduz**.

From **1713 to 1738 AD**, the Bilbas came under repeated attack by **Ottoman commanders**, supported by the **Baghdad vizier**, and by **Qajar Turks** allied with the Kurdish **Ardalan governors**. These invasions brought waves of massacre and looting upon the Kurdish population.

By **1873 AD**, despite unrelenting pressure, the Bilbas—protected by the rugged **Qandil mountains**—had never been completely subdued by either the Ottoman or Qajar Turks. The principality functioned as an alliance of major tribes, including **Mangur, Mamash, Piran, Suesn, Ako,** and **Balak**.

Other regional power figures of the period included:

- **Budagh Khan**, son of Sheikh Ali Khan Mokri, commander of Sablakh
- **Ahmad Agha Moqaddam**, commander of Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha))
- **Imam Qoli Khan Afshar**, commander of Wirme (Urmia)
- **Najaf Qoli Khan Dumbuli**, commander of Tawrez (Tabriz)

Najaf Qoli Khan, a Turk, gained notoriety in **1776 AD** for assassinating **Haji Ali Agha**, a Kurdish notable from Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)). His son, **Ahmad Agha**, succeeded him as governor of Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) and aligned himself closely with the Qajar administration in Tawrez (Tabriz).

Although ethnically Kurdish, the governors of Tawrez (Tabriz) and Maraqa (Maraqa (Maragha)) cooperated with the Qajars against the Bilbas. Ahmad Agha earned the honorary title of **"Khan"** from the Qajars after allegedly killing **Bapir Agha** of the Mangur tribe along with a thousand Bilbas cavalrymen. Over a forty-year career, he fought numerous campaigns against the **Bilbas, Mokri, Shikak, Zerza,** and **Harki** Kurds, consistently serving Qajar interests.

In **1783 AD**, Ahmad Agha killed **Mahmoud Pasha** of the Baban tribe, who had sought Bilbas support. In **1799 AD**, he joined **Ja'far Qoli Khan** in attacks on the Kurds of **Maku, Khoi,** and **Salmas**. His long tenure marked him as one of the most damaging Kurdish collaborators with the Qajar state.

3.42 – The Azerbaijani Turkic Qajar Dynasty in Iran and Kurdistan (1789–1925 AD)

Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar established the **Qajar dynasty** in **1789 AD**, initially keeping the capital in **Shiraz** for seven years before moving it to **Taran (Tehran)** in **1796 AD**. The following year, while campaigning in the Caucasus, he was assassinated by two servants.

His nephew, **Fath-Ali Shah Qajar** (1797–1834 AD), continued wars with Russia, resulting in the loss of **Georgia, Dagestan, Eastern Kurdistan, Armenia,** and **Azerbaijan** under the Treaties of **Gulistan** (1813) and **Turkmenchay** (1828).

Mohammad Shah Qajar (1834–1848 AD) faced Russian and British encroachment, failing in his bid to capture **Herat**. He died young of illness.

Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1848–1896 AD) ruled for nearly half a century, initiating some reforms but presiding over a corrupt, foreign-influenced regime. He was assassinated in 1896 by **Mirza Reza Kermani**.

Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar (1896–1907 AD) signed Iran's first constitution in 1906, establishing a **constitutional monarchy** before dying later that year.

Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar (1907–1909 AD) opposed constitutional rule, attempted to dissolve parliament, and was deposed, fleeing to Russia and later dying in France in 1930.

The final ruler, **Ahmad Shah Qajar** (1909–1925 AD), presided during **World War I**. In 1921, **Reza Pahlavi** staged a British-backed coup, forcing Ahmad Shah into exile in France in 1923. Officially deposed in **1925 AD**, his departure ended the Qajar dynasty.

Rulers of the Azerbaijani Turkic Qajar Dynasty

Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Key Events
Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar	1789–1797	Founded Qajar dynasty; moved capital to Tehran; conquered Georgia; invaded Wirme (Urmia) and Bilbas; assassinated in the Caucasus.
Fath-Ali Shah Qajar	1797–1834	Lost Georgia, Dagestan, Eastern Kurdistan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to Russia via Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828) treaties.
Mohammad Shah Qajar	1834–1848	Failed to capture Herat; faced Russian and British pressure; died young of illness.
Naser al-Din Shah Qajar	1848–1896	Longest Qajar reign; partial modernization; foreign influence; assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani.
Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar	1896–1907	Established constitutional monarchy in 1906; died later that year.
Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar	1907–1909	Opposed constitutional rule; deposed; exiled to Russia and France.
Ahmad Shah Qajar	1909–1925	Last Qajar ruler; weak leadership; overthrown by Reza Pahlavi in 1925; died in exile in 1930.

3.43 – Turkic Qajar Oppression in Eastern Kurdistan

During the **Qajar era**, the geopolitical balance of **Iran and Kurdistan** was shaped by external imperial ambitions. **Russia** sought to annex Iranian and Kurdish territories from the north, while **Britain**, **France**, and other European powers attempted to penetrate from the south. In **1804**, **Fath-Ali Shah Qajar** requested military assistance from **Napoleon Bonaparte** against Russia. This culminated in the **Treaty of Finckenstein**

(1807), aligning French and Qajar interests as part of Napoleon's broader strategy to reach **India**.

Following the treaty, **France** established **three military academies** in **Tehran**, **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, and **Isfahan** to modernize the Qajar armed forces. French advisers introduced **contemporary military tactics**, established **arms and artillery factories** in Taran (Tehran) and Tawrez (Tabriz), and even enlisted **Kurdish soldiers**, though always under **Azerbaijani Turkic Qajar command**. This foreign-backed modernization consolidated Qajar control over all of **Iran and Kurdistan**, rendering **Kurds, Persians, Baloch, Gilaks, and Arabs** politically powerless.

With French support, **Fath-Ali Shah** amassed immense wealth and indulged in personal excess. By the age of **47**, he reportedly fathered nearly **two thousand children**, spending his days in military campaigns and his nights in **palaces and harems**. While the Qajar elite enjoyed luxury, the **Kurdish nation** was reduced to servitude.

In the **Iran–Russia** and **Iran–Ottoman wars**, Kurds were disproportionately placed on the **frontlines**, suffering catastrophic losses. Entire Kurdish families abandoned their homes, surviving for years in the mountains on wild herbs. These wars brought **no political or economic gains** for the Kurds—only devastation. After the Qajar defeat, thousands of Kurds from **Ganja**, **Nakhchivan**, and the **Aras region** were displaced, many forcibly assimilated into **Azerbaijani Turkic identity**.

In **1820**, under Qajar orders, Kurdish tribes including the **Heydaranis**, **Sepakis**, **Herianis**, and **Ardavanis** were expelled from **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Ardewel (Ardabil)**, and **Maragheh**, driven into the **Hakkari mountains**. Thousands perished during this forced migration. Qajar officials openly declared that these Kurds must be **annihilated** to prevent their return. The **Treaty of Erzurum I (1822)** furthered these policies, aligning **Ottoman and Iranian Turks** in a joint effort to partition Kurdish lands and crush Kurdish resistance in **Northern and Eastern Kurdistan**.

Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (r. **1789–1833**) exploited Kurdish manpower in more than **two decades of wars** against Russia and the Ottomans, turning Kurdistan into a **perpetual battlefield**. These conflicts ended with the **Treaty of Gulistan (1813)** and **Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828)** with Russia, and the **Treaty of Erzurum (1821)** with the Ottomans.

In his campaign to secure **Wirme (Urmia)** and suppress the rebellion of **Mohammad Qoli Khan Afshar**, Fath-Ali Shah traveled through **Tawrez (Tabriz)** and **Mahabad** to Wirme (Urmia). After capturing Mohammad Qoli Khan, the Shah appointed **Hussein Qoli Khan** (a Turk) as governor, while **Abbas Mirza** was placed in overall command.

The Qajars systematically extracted resources and manpower from Kurdistan. Heavy taxes were imposed under **pretexts of war**; those unable to pay were enslaved, separated from their families, and worked to death. Kurdish resistance was met with executions meant to instill fear. Prominent Qajar officials such as **Mohammad Rahim Mirza**, **Akbar Mirza**, **Malik Mansur Mirza**, and **Ahmad Mirza** were notorious for severe repression in **Wirme (Urmia)**, **Bilbas**, and **Mokrian**.

In **1819**, **Askar Khan Afshar** attacked the **Shikak** tribe, killing its leader **Ismail Agha Shekafti** and plundering their lands. He then besieged **Mustafa Beg of Hakkari** in **Albagh** for three months, killing him and seizing his possessions. **Fath-Ali Shah Afshar** also targeted the **Herki** tribe, committing mass killings and looting, while **Emir Khan Qajar** did the same to the **Bilbas** Kurds.

In **1844**, Turkish Afshars seized a key Kurdish fortress in the mountains. After fierce fighting, the fortresses of **Kunamish** and **Bardarash** were captured and plundered. **Nurullah Beg of Hakkari**, who had supported **Bedirkhan Pasha's uprising** against the Ottomans, sought refuge with the Kurds of **Dasht** and **Targavar** after the rebellion's failure. When the Ottomans demanded his surrender, the Afshar Turks of Wirme (Urmia) used it as a pretext to attack these Kurdish areas—but were repelled by determined local resistance.

Mohammad Rahim Mirza, governor of Wirme (Urmia), frequently used deceit to eliminate Kurdish leaders. He invited tribal chiefs to his court, only to arrest and exile

them. **Ali Agha Shekafti**, chief of the Shikak, was lured under false pretenses, imprisoned, and sent to **Tehran**.

One of the most notorious episodes involved **Mir Sultan** of **Banar** in **Margavar**. When **Nematollah Mirza Afshar** sought to seize Banar's fertile lands, Mir Sultan refused. Troops under **Askar Khan**, supported by **Hasan Khan Qarapapaq** and **Mirza Agha of the Shikak**, attacked nearby **Bardasur Fortress**, killing its inhabitants and looting the settlement. Banar Fortress was then infiltrated under the guise of negotiation. Realizing the Turks' treachery, Mir Sultan committed suicide in Askar Khan's tent. Turkish forces subsequently massacred hundreds in **Margavar**, seizing thousands of livestock and properties.

By **1879**, the oppression was so severe that **Ibrahim Khan Zerza**, chief of the Zerza tribe, described contemplating mass suicide as the only escape. In his petition to the Turkish authorities in Wirme (Urmia), he recounted how they had seized his wealth and abducted the women of his tribe. His appeals were ignored, leaving armed resistance as his only option.

Hundreds of such raids were carried out by **Qajar and Ottoman Turks** against Kurdish communities, most of which were never formally recorded. These events survive chiefly through **Kurdish oral tradition and verse**, preserving the memory of sustained oppression, massacre, and plunder inflicted upon the Kurdish nation.

3.44 – The Uprising of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri (1879)

Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, a prominent Kurdish nationalist and religious leader from a distinguished family, rapidly extended his influence across **Northern Kurdistan** in the late 19th century. His rise coincided with the turbulence of the **Russo–Ottoman War (1877–1878)**, during which the **Ottoman Empire** sought to mobilize Kurdish tribal forces against **Russia**. Under **Sultan Abdul Hamid II's** call for jihad, many Kurds were placed on the frontlines, suffering heavy losses while their lands were devastated.

Disillusioned by **Ottoman manipulation** and alarmed by **Russian incursions**, Sheikh Ubeydullah refused further allegiance to the Ottomans. In **1878**, he embarked on a campaign to **unite Kurdish-inhabited territories under both Ottoman and Qajar control** into a single **autonomous Kurdistan**. He reached out to tribal leaders, intellectuals, and notables, while also attempting—unsuccessfully—to secure support from **Russian** and **European diplomats**.

Recognizing instability within the **Qajar administration**, Sheikh Ubeydullah launched his movement in **Eastern Kurdistan**. With backing from tribal forces including the **Shamsdinan, Targavar, Margavar, Zerza, Piran, Mamash, Mangur, Gewirk, Mukri, and Debokri**, he organized a **two-pronged offensive**.

The first force, under **Sheikh Abdulqadir** (his son) and **Hamza Agha of the Mangur tribe**, advanced from **Shamsdinan** toward **Shno (Oshnavieh)**, gathering additional units from **Piran** and other regions. This force soon numbered **over 10,000 cavalry and infantry** and established a base at **Sablakh (modern Mahabad)**. In **1879**, they achieved a notable victory at **Miandoab** but were later compelled to retreat when reinforced **Qajar troops—about 10,000 strong—advanced from Tawrez (Tabriz), Tehran, and Zangiyan (Zanjan)**.

The second front, commanded by **Sheikh Ubeydullah** and his son **Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq**, with **Hakkari horsemen** under **Sheikh Muhammad Amin Kaiki**, advanced toward **Wirme (Urmia)**. Despite seeking a negotiated surrender of the city, they were met with **Qajar reinforcements** from **Tawrez (Tabriz), Ardewel (Ardabil), Zangiyan (Zanjan), and Tehran**. A large-scale battle ensued in which **over 6,000 Kurdish fighters were killed**.

Ultimately, the uprising was undermined by the **combined efforts of the Qajar and Ottoman governments**, who—despite mutual rivalry—**cooperated to suppress Kurdish aspirations**. Both regimes **exploited divisions among Kurdish tribes**, turning some against others. **Britain** and **France** offered no support.

Sheikh Ubeydullah withdrew to **Northern Kurdistan** but was **lured to Istanbul** under the pretext of negotiations. Sensing danger, he returned to **Shamsdinan**, only to be **pursued, captured, and exiled to Mecca**, where he **died in 1883 under suspicious circumstances**. His son, **Sheikh Abdulqadir**, later participated in the **1925 Sheikh Saeed Piran uprising**, after which both he and **Sheikh Saeed** were **executed by the Turkish authorities**.

3.45 – The Assassination of Hamza Agha Mangur (1880)

In **1880**, during the **Qajar period**, the Turkic governor **Shojaʿ al-Dawla** orchestrated a plan to eliminate **Hamza Agha Mangur**, a leading figure descended from **Bapir Agha Mangur**. Although an ambush was prepared near **Bosa**, Hamza Agha initially evaded capture.

Following the defeat of **Sheikh Ubeydullah's uprising**, **Qajar authorities** intensified pressure on Hamza Agha. They exploited internal rivalry by installing his brother, **Kakalla**, as leader of the **Mangur tribe**, thereby weakening Hamza Agha's position. **Hasan Ali Khan**, the Qajar commander in **Wirme (Urmia)**, then invited Hamza Agha to a supposed negotiation near his military camp at **Heliabat**. Upon arrival with **four mounted guards**, Hamza Agha was **ambushed and killed**.

His **severed head** was sent to **ʿAlaʾ al-Dawla**, governor of **Wirme (Urmia)**, and **publicly displayed** to intimidate the Kurdish population before being forwarded to **Naser al-Din Shah** in **Tehran**. The Shah remarked that Hamza Agha **should not have been killed**, as he had intended to use him in military campaigns in **Lorestan**.

Section Four

4. Modern History of the Kurdish People (20th Century–Present)

The **Kurdish homeland** has been **partitioned among seven states**: **Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Armenia**. For over a century, Kurds have resisted **political domination** and **cultural erasure** by these powers. The **Kurdish language** exists in several major dialects: **Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji), Central Kurdish (Sorani), Southern Kurdish (Ilami), and Gorani**. The **suppression of Kurdish identity**, coupled with **forced assimilation policies**, has driven **continuous uprisings** and **nationalist movements** from the early 20th century to the present.

4.1 – The Enlightenment-Nationalist Uprising of Abdulrazzaq Bedirkhan (1912)

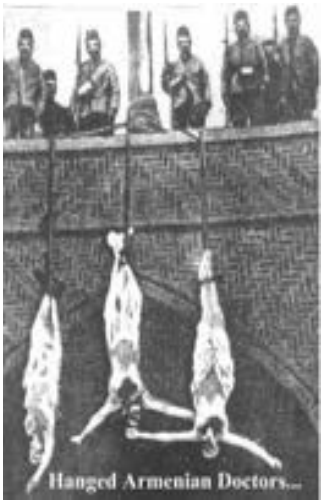
Abdulrazzaq Bedirkhan (**b. 1846, Istanbul**), grandson of **Bedirkhan Pasha**, was one of the **most prominent Kurdish intellectuals** of his time. A student of **Haji Qadir Koyi**, he combined **literary activism** with **political vision**. In **1912**, he launched a **Kurdish monthly** in **Wirme (Urmia)** promoting **language, education, and nationalist ideals**. Although exiled by **Russian intervention**, his work was briefly continued by **Ismail Agha Simko** until **Qajar authorities** shut it down in **1914**.

In **1913**, Abdulrazzaq founded the **Kurdish Enlightenment Society** and opened a **Kurdish-language school** for **29 students**. The **Iranian authorities** destroyed the school and dispersed the community. Despite setbacks, his activities in **Van** and **Erzurum** inspired an **intellectual awakening**. His political strategy involved outreach to **Russia** for support, though **internal divisions among Kurdish leaders** weakened the movement. Abdulrazzaq's political philosophy emphasized **education in the Kurdish language** as the foundation of **national liberation**. His advocacy established him as the **first Kurdish leader to develop a comprehensive independence plan** grounded in **cultural empowerment**.

4.2 – The Armenian Genocide (1915)

Under **Sultan Abdul Hamid II**, the **Ottoman Empire** orchestrated systematic **massacres of Armenians**, culminating in the **genocide of 1915** in which approximately **1.5 million Armenians** were killed. The **Hamidiye Brigades**, composed partly of **Kurdish tribal forces** recruited under the guise of **Islamic unity**, were manipulated into participating in attacks against Armenians.

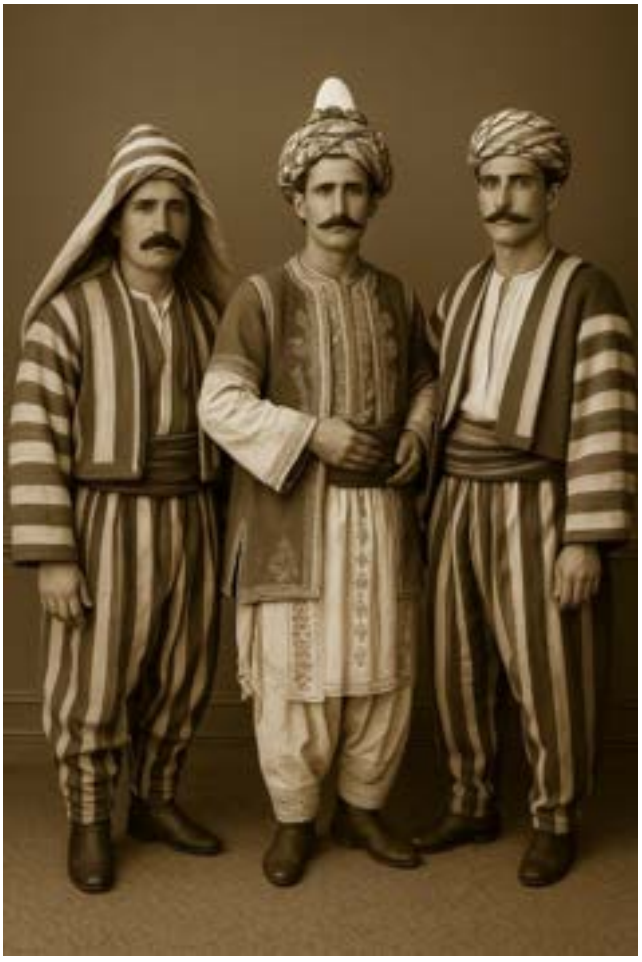
After displacing Armenians, the Ottoman authorities also targeted **Kurdish communities**, falsely warning of **Russian attacks** to provoke mass flight. This facilitated further **massacres** and **looting of Kurdish villages**. The **policies of Turkification** formulated under Abdul Hamid II became a **structural component** of the **Turkish state's approach** to both Armenians and Kurds well into the **21st century**.



4.3 – The Uprising of Sheikh Mahmoud Tamrxani (1919–1924)

Sheikh Mahmoud Tamrxani of **Targavar** led repeated **Kurdish uprisings** against **Azerbaijani Turkic settlers** and **Qajar authority** in **Wirme (Urmia)**. Following early defeats in **1919**, Kurdish forces fortified **Dambadim fortress**. In **1924**, after multiple failed assaults, the **Afshar Turks** poisoned the fortress water supply, leading to widespread illness. Under assurances of **safe passage**, the defenders surrendered, only to be **massacred**. **Eighty-six Kurdish women** committed suicide by leaping from the fortress walls to avoid **capture and abuse**.

This campaign formed part of a **broader pattern** of **expulsion, mass killing, and assimilation** targeting **Kurdish tribes** across **Tawrez (Tabriz), Wirme (Urmia), and Ardewel (Ardabil)**. These events entrenched **Kurdish–Turkic hostility** and reinforced calls for **national self-defense**.



A digitally reconstructed image of the Kurds of this era.

4.4 – Establishment of the Turkish Ottoman Empire (1299 AD)

Following the **Mongol invasions** of the **Seljuk Empire**, Seljuk authority weakened significantly, creating a power vacuum in **Anatolia**. **Osman I**, son of **Ertuğrul** and leader of the nomadic Turkic **Kayı** tribe—originally migrants from **Central Asia**—seized the opportunity to expand his influence. In **1299 AD**, Osman I launched a series of **military conquests**, forcibly capturing villages and towns across Anatolia. That same year, he **declared independence** from the declining **Seljuk Sultanate**, which was under Mongol dominance. At this stage, Ottoman control extended only over parts of **central Anatolia** and **northern Kurdistan**.

Prior to the Seljuk period, **Anatolia**, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Balkan states were ruled by the **Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire**. Formally separating from the **Western Roman Empire** after the death of **Theodosius I** in **395 AD**, the Byzantine Empire endured from approximately **330 to 1453 AD**, with **Constantinople** (modern-day **Istanbul**) as its capital. Greek was the official language, and **Christianity** was the dominant religion.

By the 13th and 14th centuries, the Byzantines were in decline due to successive **Seljuk** and **Mongol invasions**. The empire ultimately fell in **1453 AD**, when **Sultan Mehmed II** of the Ottomans launched a decisive campaign from central Anatolia, capturing **Constantinople**. This conquest marked the **end of the Byzantine Empire** and secured Ottoman control over all of **Anatolia** and the former Byzantine capital. In the centuries that followed, **Islam** and **Turkish identity** gradually replaced Byzantine culture, the Greek language, and Orthodox Christianity.

Key Rulers of the Ottoman Empire in the Region

Name of Ruler	**Reign Period (AD)**	**Capital**	**Region of Rule**	**Cause of Death / Fate**
Osman I	**1299–1326**	Bursa	Anatolia	Natural death

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Region of Rule	Cause of Death / Fate
Orhan	**1326–1359**	Bursa	Anatolia	Natural death
Murad I	**1359–1389**	Edirne	Anatolia	Killed in battle
Bayezid I	**1389–1402**	Edirne	Anatolia, Balkans	Died in **Timur's** prison
Mehmed I	**1413–1421**	Edirne	Anatolia, Balkans	Natural death
Murad II	**1421–1451**	Edirne	Anatolia, Balkans	Illness
Mehmed II	**1451–1481**	Constantinople	Anatolia, Balkans	Conquered Byzantium; poisoned
Bayezid II	**1481–1512**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan	Poisoned
Selim I	**1512–1520**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Poisoned
Suleiman I	**1520–1566**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death
Selim II	**1566–1574**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Died from wounds after heat exposure
Murad III	**1574–1595**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Illness after internal conflict

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Region of Rule	Cause of Death / Fate
Mehmed III	**1595–1603**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Killed 19 brothers; died of illness
Ahmed I	**1603–1617**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Typhus
Mustafa I	**1617–1623**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Mental illness; deposed
Osman II	**1618–1622**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Executed
Murad IV	**1623–1640**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Alcoholism
Ibrahim I	**1640–1648**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Executed after turmoil
Mehmed IV	**1648–1687**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death
Suleiman II	**1687–1691**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Region of Rule	Cause of Death / Fate
Ahmed II	**1691–1695**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Illness after war with Austria
Mustafa II	**1695–1703**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Lost Hungary; died in exile
Ahmed III	**1703–1730**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death
Mahmud I	**1730–1754**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death
Osman III	**1754–1757**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Natural death
Mustafa III	**1757–1774**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Built modern army; abdicated
Abdulhamid I	**1774–1789**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Stroke during war with Russia
Selim III	**1789–1807**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Assassinated

Name of Ruler	Reign Period (AD)	Capital	Region of Rule	Cause of Death / Fate
Mahmud II	**1808–1839**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Illness
Abdulmecid I	**1839–1861**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Tuberculosis
Murad V	**1876**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Illness
Abdulhamid II	**1876–1909**	Istanbul	Anatolia, Balkans, Kurdistan, Egypt, Arab lands	Deposed; died later
Mehmed V	**1909–1918**	Istanbul	Anatolia	Faced World War I; illness
Mehmed VI	**1918–1922**	Istanbul	Anatolia	Last Ottoman Sultan; died in exile

Collapse of the Ottoman Empire

The **Ottoman Empire** collapsed following a long period of **internal decline** and **military defeats**, culminating in the aftermath of **World War I (1914–1918)**.

Key factors in the empire's downfall included:

1. **Alliance with Germany** and the **Central Powers** during World War I, which ended in defeat.

2. **Occupation of Istanbul and parts of Anatolia** by the Allied Powers—**Britain, France, Italy, and Greece**—between **1918 and 1920**, with active partitioning of Ottoman territories.
3. **Deposition and exile of the last sultan, Mehmed VI**, in **1922**.
4. **Formal dissolution of the Ottoman Empire** and the proclamation of the **Republic of Turkey** in **1923**.

Following the empire's collapse, **Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk)** became the **first president** of the new republic. He introduced sweeping reforms, including **secularism**, a **new civil code**, and the **adoption of the Latin alphabet**, transforming Turkey into a modern nation-state.

4.5 – World War I (1914 AD)

World War I—a global conflict that engulfed **much of Kurdistan**—brought **widespread destruction, displacement, and massacres** to the Kurdish people. Tens of thousands of Kurds were **killed or driven from their homes**, with **no political or territorial gains** in return. On one side, **Russian, British, and French forces**, and on the other, **Ottoman-Turkish and German forces**, turned **Kurdistan into a battlefield**, leaving towns in ruins, infrastructure destroyed, and entire communities shattered. The war also deepened **internal divisions** among Kurds, weakening any chance of a unified national strategy.

A pivotal consequence of the war was the **Sykes–Picot Agreement** of **May 16, 1916**, signed by **Sir Mark Sykes** (Britain), **Georges Picot** (France), and **Sergey Sazonov** (Russia). Without Kurdish participation, this treaty **partitioned Kurdish lands** as follows:

- **To Russia:** Provinces of **Kars, Iğdır, Erzurum, Erzincan, Van, Bitlis, Muş, Siirt, and Ağrı**.
- **Under Russian control at the time:** Eastern Kurdish cities including **Wirme (Urmia), Sanandaj, Kirmashan, Ilam, Rawanduz, Penjwen, and Khanaqin**.

- **To France:** Western Kurdish regions such as **Hasakah, Qamishli, and Afrin**, incorporated into the **French mandate over Syria and Lebanon**.
- **To Britain:** Southern Kurdish provinces including **Mosul, Duhok, Hawler (Erbil), Sulaymaniyah, and Kirkuk**, placed within the **British Mandate of Iraq and Palestine**.
- **To the new Turkish state:** Northern Kurdish provinces of **Diyarbakır, Şırnak, Batman, Dersim, Botan, Maraş, Latika, Malatya, and Sivas**.
- **To Iran:** Regions such as **Luristan, Ilam, Genaveh, Khuzestan, and Yazkurd** in eastern Kurdistan.

The **Kurds were entirely excluded** from these arrangements, receiving neither consultation nor recognition of sovereignty.

Following the **Bolshevik October Revolution** in **1917**, **Russia withdrew** from Kurdistan (1918), allowing **Ottoman Turks** and **Azerbaijani Turks from Iran** to **reoccupy parts of northern and eastern Kurdistan**, carrying out **massacres and large-scale looting** with impunity.

By the end of the war, **over 500,000 Kurds had been killed**, and vast territories were lost. Kurdish fighters who had joined **Ottoman ranks** were consequently regarded as enemies by **Russia, Britain, and France**, further isolating Kurdish aspirations. The absence of a **coordinated Kurdish uprising** during this period was largely due to **religious leaders and sheikhs** aligning with the **Ottoman jihad**, weakening any chance of independent representation at postwar negotiations.

Had **Russia not withdrawn**, parts of **Eastern and Northern Kurdistan** might have remained under Russian control, potentially enabling independence by the **1990s**, much like other post-Soviet states. Instead, Kurdistan's **strategic location** and **rich resources**—including oil, water, agricultural land, and minerals—were coveted by **Ottoman, Iranian, British, and French powers**, each annexing portions into their respective empires or zones of influence.

4.6 – The Simko Shikak Rebellion (1918–1930 AD)

The **Shikak tribe**, based in the **Soma** and **Bradost** regions west of **Salmas** and **Wirme (Urmia)**, numbered around **6,000 families** by **1920**, making them one of the **largest and most powerful Kurdish tribes** of their time. From **1841 to 1893**, they maintained firm control over the Soma region, resisting outside domination.

Historical Leadership Lineage

The Shikak were led successively by:

- **Ismail Agha** – great-grandfather of **Simko**
- **Ali Agha** – son of Ismail Agha
- **Hama Pasha** – son of Ali Agha
- **Simko** – son of Hama Pasha and great-grandson of Ismail Agha

The family had a long history of resisting foreign control, although they at times imposed **harsh local rule** over Kurdish communities.

In **1759**, under orders from the **Qajar Shah**, **Ismail Agha** led an assault on the Kurdish **Mir of Rawanduz**, killing **Aysa Muhammad Pasha (Mir Abdullah Pasha)**, destroying his rule, and looting the citadel. Despite serving **Fath-Ali Shah Qajar**, Ismail Agha was eventually **betrayed and assassinated** in **1831** during a ceremonial gathering in **Koreh**.

Ali Agha succeeded him, navigating the turbulent politics between **Iran** and the **Ottoman Empire**. When **Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri** launched his uprising (1880–1881), Ali Agha sided with the **Qajar Turks** in suppressing it. Later, he waged **guerrilla war** against the Qajars (1896–1906) but was eventually **captured, imprisoned, and executed** after being handed over by **Sultan Abdul Hamid II**.

Hama Pasha then became chief, resisting Qajar authority. In **1905**, he was lured to **Tawrez (Tabriz)** under the guise of peace talks but was **ambushed and killed** alongside his son **Jawhar Agha**.

Simko's Rise and Military Campaigns

Simko assumed leadership in **1905**, ruling over **Wirme (Urmia), Salmas, and Khoy** until **1930**. He supported Kurdish uprisings in **Northern Kurdistan** and resisted both **Qajar** and **Pahlavi** forces. By **summer 1918**, he had **liberated territories west of Lake Wirme (Urmia)**, and by **1922**, his authority extended to **Mahabad, Shno (Oshnavieh), Daryas (Naqadeh), Khane (Piranshar), Baneh, and Sardasht**.

In **1922**, **Reza Shah Pahlavi** launched an **eight-year campaign** against Simko, culminating in **1930** when Simko was **invited under false pretenses to peace negotiations in Shno**, only to be **ambushed and killed**. Following his death, Iranian forces **massacred Kurdish civilians** and established **gendarmerie posts** to maintain control.

Political and Diplomatic Strategy

During **World War I**, Simko engaged in **diplomatic and military maneuvering** with **Ottoman, Russian, Iranian, and British forces**, aiming to advance **Kurdish autonomy**.

Legacy and Limitations

While Simko emerged as a **symbol of Kurdish nationalism**—inspiring later movements—his involvement in the **assassination of Mar Shimun Benyamin** and conflicts with **Assyrian communities** damaged his international reputation.

Reasons for failure included:

1. **Geopolitical obstacles** – Competing imperial interests blocked unified foreign support.
2. **Internal Kurdish divisions** – Rival tribal and political factions weakened cohesion.
3. **Military disadvantages** – The Iranian army eventually outmatched Simko's forces.

Simko’s brother, **Khurshid**, was killed by a **grenade assassination attempt** ordered by the Iranian state. Simko left behind two children—**Khosrow** and **Safiya**—who later took refuge in **Istanbul** and **Hawler (Erbil)**.

Simko Shikak

Simko and Several Fellow Combatants

4.7 – The Treaty of Sèvres (1919–1920)

Following the conclusion of **World War I** in **1919**, the **victorious Allied Powers** sought to determine the postwar settlement with the defeated Ottoman Empire and its former territories. Representatives of the **Ottoman Empire**, as well as **Kurdish** and **Armenian** delegations, were invited to the **Sèvres Conference**, held in the Sèvres district of Paris.

The **Armenian delegation** was led by **Boghos Nubar Pasha**, while the **Kurdish delegation** was headed by the **Kurdish Society** and its representative, **Şerif Pasha**, who acted as the **official delegate of the Kurdish people**.

Diplomatic Proceedings

The **first session** of the conference took place on **22 March 1919**, and the **second session** followed on **1 March 1920**. During these sessions, **Şerif Pasha** and **Boghos Nubar Pasha** held discussions and reached a **mutual understanding**, forming a **political alliance** to advance the **national demands** of both the Kurdish and Armenian peoples. Their demands were jointly incorporated into the draft of the **Treaty of Sèvres**, signed on **10 August 1920**.

Recognition of Kurdish Demands

For the first time in modern international diplomacy, the **national aspirations of the Kurds** were formally acknowledged by the **Allied Powers**. **Articles 62, 63, and 64** of the treaty provided for:

- The **creation of an autonomous Kurdish region** within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.
- A **referendum after one year** to determine, based on the will of the Kurdish population, whether **full independence** would be declared.

The proposed **geographical boundaries** of Kurdistan included **all of Southern Kurdistan**, incorporating **Mosul** and **Kirkuk**.

Failure of Implementation

Despite its groundbreaking provisions, the **Treaty of Sèvres** was **never implemented**. It remained **a document on paper**, ultimately disregarded due to **shifting geopolitical realities**, the rise of **Turkish nationalist resistance** under **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**, and the eventual replacement of Sèvres by the **Treaty of Lausanne** in 1923.

General Sharif Pasha

4.8 – The Erzurum Congress (1919)

Following the **collapse of the Ottoman Empire** in **World War I**, the **Allied Powers** convened a **peace conference in Paris (1919)**, which affirmed the **principle of self-determination** for peoples formerly under Ottoman rule. In response, the **Ottoman state** initiated political efforts to **pacify Kurdish sentiment** and maintain territorial integrity.

One of the most notable initiatives was undertaken by **Mustafa Kemal Pasha**—later known as **Atatürk**—the emerging leader of the **Turkish nationalist movement**. Between **23 July and 7 August 1919**, he traveled to **Kurdistan** and convened a gathering in **Erzurum** with **Kurdish elders, tribal leaders, and chieftains**. This meeting, officially called the **"National Congress of the Eastern Provinces"**, later became known as the **Erzurum Congress**.

In his address to the Kurdish delegates, **Mustafa Kemal** declared:

"Oh Kurdish people, we are brothers and of the same faith. The infidels seek to subject us to their tyranny and hand over our lands to the Armenians. At that point, we would lose our religion, homeland, and honor. I pledge my word of honor that we must unite against the Armenian infidels and fight them to expel them from our country. Then, we will live as brothers, and we will grant the Kurdish people their rights."

By appealing to **shared religion and mutual defense**, Mustafa Kemal **persuaded the Kurds** to align with the **Ottoman-Turkish nationalist cause**. This political maneuver **undermined Kurdish aspirations** for **autonomy or independence**, and in effect, contributed to the eventual **disregard of the Treaty of Sèvres**—which had promised the Kurds the right to self-determination.

4.9 – Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji's Revolt (1919–1930)

In the aftermath of **World War I**, **Britain** established control over **Iraq** and **Southern Kurdistan** as part of its **colonial mandate**. During this period, **Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji**—a respected religious leader and political figure—was appointed **Governor of Sulaymaniyah**.

However, **Sheikh Mahmud** openly rejected British authority and **declared the independence of Kurdistan**, seeking to form a **sovereign Kurdish state**. His call for independence resonated widely—garnering the support of **Sulaymaniyah's population**, large segments of **Southern Kurdistan**, and even some **Eastern Kurdish tribes**. Notably, **Selaam Barzani** of **Badinan** and **Ismail Agha Simko** of the **Shikak** tribe also extended their support.

First Uprising (1919–1921)

Tensions escalated when British and Iraqi forces launched a **joint military campaign** against Barzanji. In the **Battle of Darbandi Bazian**, Kurdish forces were defeated, and **Sheikh Mahmud** was captured. He was subsequently **exiled to India** in an effort to neutralize his influence.

Return and Proclamation of Kingship (1922–1923)

On **14 August 1922**, Barzanji returned from exile to **Sulaymaniyah**. Welcomed by the Kurdish population, he **proclaimed himself "King of Kurdistan"** and once again **declared independence**, raising the **Kurdish national flag**. In retaliation, British and Iraqi forces **bombarded Sulaymaniyah** on **4 March 1923**, inflicting heavy casualties.

Final Phase of the Revolt (1927–1930)

From **1927 to 1930**, Sheikh Mahmud renewed his resistance, now commanding the loyalty of **most Southern Kurdish tribes** opposed to the **British Mandate** and the **partition of Kurdish lands** between **Iraq, Turkey, and Syria**. Despite this unity, British

aerial bombardments and superior weaponry gradually **overwhelmed the Kurdish forces**.

In **1930**, following intense battles and the **loss of thousands of Kurdish fighters**, Sheikh Mahmud was captured and imprisoned in **Baghdad**. Though later released due to illness, he **continued to claim the title "King of Kurdistan"** until his death in **1956** in a Baghdad hospital—far from his homeland.

Historical Significance

Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji remains a **symbol of Kurdish national resistance**, remembered for his **bold defiance against colonial and regional domination**. His leadership played a crucial role in **preserving Kurdish identity** during a period when **external and internal forces sought to suppress it**.

Effects of the Uprising:

Positive Impacts

- Fostered **unity** among certain Kurdish factions and strengthened the **idea of a shared national cause**.
- Provided a **model of resistance** that inspired **future Kurdish leaders**.

Negative Impacts

- Ultimately failed to **establish an independent Kurdish state**.
- Caused **severe human and material losses** in Southern Kurdistan.
- Deepened tensions with the **British authorities** and facilitated the **further partitioning** of Kurdish lands.

Key Reasons for Failure

1. **Lack of International Support** – No sustained foreign backing, despite occasional regional sympathy.

2. **Limited Military Capacity** – Kurdish forces were **outgunned and outnumbered** by the **well-equipped British army**.
3. **British and Iraqi Supremacy** – The mandate authorities effectively used **military and political leverage** to crush resistance.
4. **Internal Kurdish Divisions** – Differing loyalties weakened the **cohesion of the independence movement**.
5. **Hostile Geopolitical Climate** – Regional and global powers—including **Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Britain, and France**—all opposed Kurdish independence.

The defeat of **Sheikh Mahmud's revolt** marked the **end of large-scale Kurdish uprisings** in Southern Kurdistan during the early 20th century. While his efforts failed politically, his **legacy endured** as a rallying point for **Kurdish nationalism** in the decades that followed.

Sheikh Mahmoud Barzinji

4.10 – The National Pact (Misak-ı Millî), 1920

Following **Mustafa Kemal Pasha's** meetings in **Erzurum** and **Sivas** with **Kurdish leaders from Northern Kurdistan**—during which he presided over the **Erzurum Congress** and **offered assurances of mutual support and cooperation**—the Ottoman state took a decisive and hostile stance.

On **18 January 1920**, during an **Istanbul assembly**, the Ottoman authorities formally adopted the **National Pact** (*Misak-ı Millî*). This declaration, regarded as a cornerstone of Turkish nationalist policy, explicitly asserted:

"Northern Kurdistan must remain permanently under Turkish control, and Southern Kurdistan—comprising the provinces of Mosul and Kirkuk—must also be annexed to Turkey. Until this objective is fully achieved, the Turkish state must persistently strive and struggle for its realization."

This **policy statement** made it clear that, **from the outset**, Mustafa Kemal's earlier **promises of Kurdish autonomy**—including those made at the **Erzurum Congress**—were **calculated political manoeuvres**. The intent was to **secure Kurdish cooperation** during a period of Ottoman weakness, only to **abandon and betray these commitments** once the state regained its footing.

Historically, this pattern has recurred repeatedly:

- **Occupiers of Kurdistan**, when militarily weakened, **entice the Kurds with promises of freedom or self-rule**.
- Once stability is restored, these same powers **turn against the Kurds with renewed aggression**, stripping away rights, erasing identity, and enforcing **assimilation policies** more ruthlessly than before.

In the **contemporary era**, this historical cycle continues. The **Kurdish population**, numbering **over eight million** in **Turkey alone**, remains **stateless** despite inhabiting a **territory larger than that of most of the states occupying Kurdistan**. The Kurdish

homeland spans across **Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan**, yet **no independent Kurdish state exists**.

Compounding the problem, many Kurds have become **disconnected from the national cause**—some aligning themselves with the **political and cultural agendas of the occupying powers**, seeking **personal survival** over **collective liberation**. This shift has weakened **Kurdish national consciousness** and diverted attention from **education, self-awareness, and political organisation**.

Moreover, a portion of the Kurdish population has embraced **assimilationist ambitions**, aspiring to be **Turkified, Azerified, Persianized, Arabized, or absorbed into religious identities** that **supersede their national identity**. Such trends represent a profound challenge to **Kurdish unity, cultural preservation, and the struggle for self-determination**.

What is *Mîsaqî Millî*?

The **Misaqî Millî (National Pact)** was adopted by the last Ottoman Parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan) in **January 1920**.

It is a political declaration — not an international treaty — that declared the territorial aims and "national rights" of the Turkish nation after WWI.

It did not directly recognize Kurdistan or Kurdish independence — but it talked about "Muslim-majority lands" in the east, including Kurdish areas — with the idea that they should be part of the new Turkey.

Summary of Key Points in *Mîsaqî Millî* (relevant to Kurds/Kurdistan):

1. **Unity of Muslim-majority lands** — The lands in the east (Kurdish-majority lands) are part of this new Turkey — no talk of autonomy or independence.
2. **Self-determination in Arab areas (Arab provinces)** — Not in Kurdish ones.
3. **Protection of minorities** — vague general statement.

The National Pact (Misak-ı Milli)

4.11 – The Dersim Uprising (1937–1938)

Dr. Nuri Dersimi (1893–1973) was a **Kurdish writer, revolutionary, and intellectual** whose activism significantly shaped the Kurdish independence struggle in the early 20th century. Born in 1893 in the village of **Darê**, near the city of **Dersim**, he was the son of **Mullah Ibrahim**.

In **1908**, together with like-minded companions, he founded **"The Society of Kurdish Awakening"** (*Komela Bilindayî Kurd*), assuming responsibility for its **clandestine operations**. Three years later, in **1911**, he relocated to **Istanbul** to study veterinary medicine. While there, he became deeply involved in **Kurdish nationalist movements**, forming ties with the **Kurdish student association Hevî**. In **1912**, he was elected **General Secretary of Kurdish Students from Kurdistan** in Istanbul.

Involvement in the Kurdish Independence Movement

After the **Ottoman Empire** ignored the provisions of the **Treaty of Sèvres** (1920), Dr. Nuri, alongside **Ali Sher**, travelled to **Koçgiri** to mobilise the local population and press for the treaty's implementation. The Ottoman authorities rejected these demands, prompting the launch of the **Koçgiri Uprising (1919–1921)**.

Dr. Nuri was **captured** during the fighting but later **released through the intervention of Seyid Riza Dersimi**. He subsequently joined Seyid Riza's forces. Opposing the rise of **Turkish ethnic nationalism**, Dr. Nuri advocated for **Kurdish autonomy within a federative framework** and established an office for the **Kurdistan Uprising Society** in **October 1920**.

During the **Dersim Uprising (1937–1938)**, Dr. Nuri was a **prominent leader and strategist**. The Turkish army responded with overwhelming force, launching a **brutal military campaign** across Dersim and surrounding Kurdish regions. The result was **massacres of thousands of Kurds** and the **forced displacement of tens of thousands more**. Following the **execution of Seyid Riza**, Dr. Nuri fled to **Western**

Kurdistan (Rojava) in **Syria**, where he continued his advocacy under **French Mandate** rule.

Positive Outcomes of the Uprising

- **Affirmation of Kurdish–Dersimi Identity** – Through his writings, political activities, and leadership, Dr. Nuri contributed significantly to the **preservation and promotion of Kurdish cultural heritage**.

Negative Consequences of the Uprising

- **Massacres and Displacement** – The uprising triggered one of the most violent crackdowns in Turkish Republican history, resulting in **large-scale killings, mass deportations, and the destruction of Kurdish communities**.
- **Exile of Leadership** – In **1937**, Dr. Nuri fled Northern Kurdistan, first to **Greece** and then to **Syria**, living the rest of his life in exile. His physical absence diminished his direct influence on the Kurdish struggle in Turkey.

Reasons for the Uprising's Failure

1. **Internal Divisions** – Rivalries among Kurdish leaders and a lack of unified command undermined effective resistance.
2. **Repressive Turkish State Policies** – The Ankara government employed **scorched-earth tactics**, militarisation, and mass arrests to break Kurdish resistance.
3. **Absence of International Support** – The Kurdish cause lacked **foreign backing or diplomatic recognition**, isolating the movement.

Dr. Nuri Dersimi's life and work reflect both the **resilience and the tragedy** of the Kurdish national struggle in the early 20th century. Despite imprisonment, exile, and military defeat, he remained unwavering in his commitment to **Kurdish political and cultural rights**. His legacy endures as a **symbol of steadfast resistance** against the forces of assimilation and oppression.

Dr. Nuri Dersimi

4.12 – The Treaty of Lausanne (1923)

Following the **Ottoman Empire's military victory** over Greece and the Allied Powers on **10 November 1922**, the empire was invited to participate in a peace conference convened by the Allied nations. The conference was held in **Lausanne, Switzerland**, with **İsmet Pasha** representing the Ottoman state and **Lord Curzon** representing the British Empire.

Over a period of **nine months**, the Ottoman delegation adopted an **aggressive, ultra-nationalist policy** aimed at **suppressing and denying Kurdish rights**. On **24 July 1923**, the **Treaty of Lausanne** was signed, **annulling the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres** and **revoking all rights previously recognised for the Kurdish people**.

No Kurdish representatives were present, and **no discussion of Kurdish rights** took place during the negotiations. As the **Kurdish nation was excluded** from the process, they are entitled—under principles of international law—to **reject the treaty**, call for its **annulment**, and **seek legal redress**.

Under the Lausanne settlement, **Kurdistan was formally divided into four parts**, with former Ottoman Kurdish territories partitioned between **Turkey, Iraq, and Syria**. **Britain and France**, acting in their own **economic and strategic interests**, disregarded Kurdish aspirations for statehood and sovereignty.

Behind the scenes, **secret agreements** further undermined the Kurdish cause:

- **Turkey ceded Cyprus** to Britain; in return, **Britain and France divided Kurdistan** between Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, while **recognising the independence of Turkey**.
- **Oil and agricultural resources** from Kurdistan were to be transferred to Britain and France at **below-market prices**, while **arms and military equipment** flowed to Turkey, Iraq, and Syria from Western suppliers.
- **Western powers pledged full support** to the occupying states, prioritising **geopolitical and economic interests** over Kurdish self-determination.

It is clear that the Treaty of Lausanne was **a treaty of force, not justice**, serving as a foundation for **systematic denial of Kurdish identity and human rights**. The legacy of Lausanne continues to underpin the statelessness of millions of Kurds to this day.

4.13 – The Red Kurdistan Autonomy (1923–1929)

Red Kurdistan (*Kurdistani Sor*) was an **autonomous administrative region** within the Soviet Union from **1923 to 1929**. Officially established on **7 July 1923** within the **Socialist Soviet Republic**, it was not an independent state but rather a **self-governing entity under the authority of the Soviet Communist Party**.

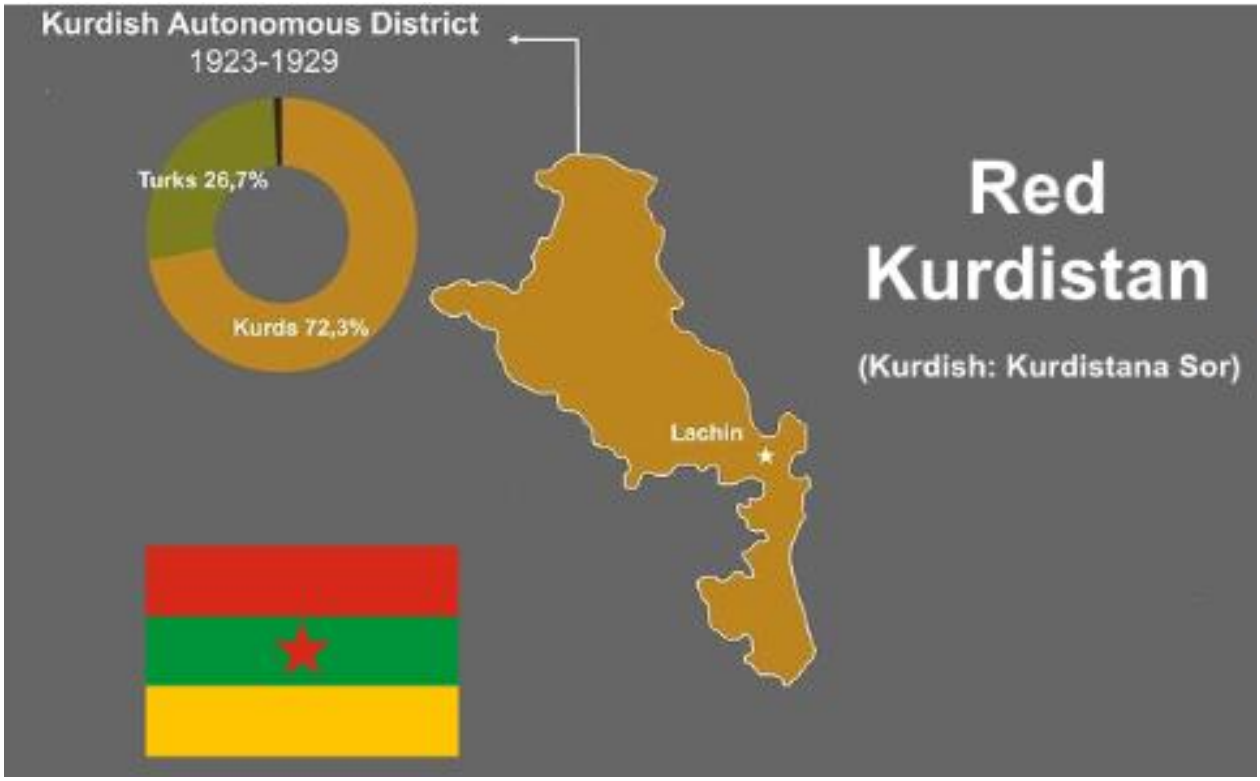
The region's **capital** was **Lachin**, strategically located between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Administration and education were conducted in **Kurdish and Russian**. The territory was home to approximately **500,000 Kurds**, concentrated in **Lachin, Kelbajar, Qubadli**, and along the **Aras River**—areas historically inhabited by Kurdish communities.

A **local Soviet Council** composed of Kurds managed day-to-day affairs but operated under **strict Party oversight from Moscow**. Between **1920 and 1923**, Red Kurdistan had been under Azerbaijani occupation; before 1920, it was under Soviet control, and prior to that, part of the Russian Empire.

In **1929**, as part of **Joseph Stalin's policy of centralisation and ethnic integration**, the autonomy of Red Kurdistan was **abolished**, and its territory was **fully incorporated into Soviet Azerbaijan**.

Following this annexation, **mass deportations of Kurds** began. During **Stalin's purges in the 1930s**, thousands of Kurds were forcibly relocated to **Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Georgia**, and **eastern Russia**. The Azerbaijani regime also encouraged **assimilation** policies to erode Kurdish identity in the region.

Although some Kurdish communities remained in place, by the **late Soviet era (1980s)**, renewed efforts by Kurdish activists to **restore Red Kurdistan's autonomy** were blocked by **Azerbaijani political opposition**. To this day, the dissolution of Red Kurdistan stands as **a symbol of the fragility of Kurdish autonomy under external political control**.



Map and Flag of Red Kurdistan (1923–1929)

The map of the cities of Red Kurdistan that have been occupied by the Azerbaijani authorities since 1929.

4.14 – The Sheikh Said Piran Uprising (1925)

Sheikh Said Piran, a respected Kurdish religious leader, spearheaded a major **national uprising** in **1925** against the **occupying Turkish Republic**, seeking to establish an **independent Kurdistan**. This revolt—rooted in **nationalist and patriotic ideals**—came to be known as the **Sheikh Said Rebellion**.

Formation of the Azadî Organisation

In **1923**, Kurdish political figure **Yusuf Ziya Bey** connected Sheikh Said with **Azadî** (*Freedom*), a secret Kurdish nationalist organisation advocating for **Kurdish independence**. As Turkish authorities began **arresting suspected Kurdish dissidents**, the uprising ignited in **Piran** on **13 February 1925**, rapidly evolving into a **broad-based popular rebellion**.

During the early stages, **Khalid Beg Jibran**, the organisation's leader, and **Yusuf Ziya Bey** were captured during clashes in Erzurum. Sheikh Said subsequently assumed leadership of Azadî and initiated a **coordinated military and political campaign** against Turkish rule.

Following the **Treaty of Lausanne**, which cemented the **division of Kurdistan**, Turkey had repeatedly **betrayed its promises to the Kurds**, using them strategically and then denying their rights. Sheikh Said's revolt was both a **response to this betrayal** and an assertion of **Kurdish self-determination**.

Planning and Early Mobilisation

Sheikh Said convened a series of **strategic meetings** to organise the revolt:

- **4 January 1925** – Qiriqan village
- **Subsequent meetings** – Kanî Spî and Malakanê villages

With an army of **approximately 10,000 horsemen**, Sheikh Said toured **Northern Kurdistan** to rally popular support, visiting:

- **Çabaxçur** – 12 January
- **Dara Hênê** – 15 January
- **Licê** – 21 January
- **Hênê** – 25 January
- **Piran** – 5 February

These efforts secured **widespread local backing**. Alarmed, **Mustafa Kemal Pasha** dispatched an army under **Hussein Hosni** to crush the movement. Kurdish villagers resisted fiercely, inflicting casualties on Turkish forces.

Expansion and Administration

The rebellion liberated **Hênê, Genç, and Dara Hênê**, declaring **Genç** as the **provisional capital** of a Kurdish administration, with **Faqe Weysî** as political head and Sheikh Said as **commander of the Kurdish forces**. On **14 February 1925**, **Dara Hênê** was declared the capital of Kurdistan.

From **16–20 February 1925**, Kurdish forces captured **Maden, Siverek, Ergani**, and advanced towards **Diyarbakir**. On **20 February**, they took **Licê** and seized the barracks of the Turkish army's Fifth Division.

By **7–11 March 1925**, Kurdish forces liberated **Diyarbakir**. Despite multiple assaults, they held the city until **26 March**, when **Turkish aerial bombardments** and ground offensives began to reverse Kurdish gains.

Defeat and Capture

On **15 April 1925**, Sheikh Said was betrayed and captured near **Karpo Bridge** close to **Varto**. From **28–29 June 1925**, he and **47 fellow Kurdish leaders** were tried in a **Turkish military court**—denied legal defence—and executed by hanging in **Sêdarê**.

Positive Outcomes of the Uprising

- **Kurdish National Awakening** – The rebellion significantly elevated Kurdish political consciousness and strengthened the demand for **self-determination**.

Negative Consequences

- **Mass Repression** – The Turkish state responded with **executions, mass arrests**, and **widespread massacres** of Kurdish civilians.
- **Cultural Suppression** – A decade-long policy of **forced Turkification** intensified, targeting the Kurdish language, culture, and identity.

Causes of Failure

1. **Lack of Unified Kurdish Support** – Certain Kurdish factions sided with the Turkish government, undermining resistance.
2. **Military Inferiority** – Kurdish forces were **outnumbered and poorly equipped**, unable to withstand aerial bombardments.
3. **Absence of International Backing** – The uprising remained isolated, with no external diplomatic or military support.

The Sheikh Said Rebellion remains a pivotal chapter in Kurdish history, symbolising both the **determination to resist occupation** and the **heavy costs of confronting a powerful, unified state without international support**.

The Execution of Sheikh Sa'id Piran

Sheikh Sa'id Piran – Commander of the Kurdish Army, was executed by hanging on **29 June 1925** in the city of **Diyarbakir**.

General Khalid Beg Jibran – Commander of the Kurdish Liberation Army, was executed by hanging on **14 April 1925** in the city of **Bitlis**.

The execution of 47 individuals from among the leaders of the uprising and companions of Sheikh Saʿid Piran.

A photograph of several fellow revolutionaries who were executed alongside Sheikh Saeed Piran in Seydareh at the same time.

Dr. Fuad Pasha (Fuad Barkho) – Deputy President of Kurdistan, who was executed by hanging in Diyarbakir, on 27/05/1925.

4.15 – The Rise to Power of the Turkic-Azeri Pahlavi Dynasty in Iran (1925–1979)

In the aftermath of **World War I**, **Iran** was effectively partitioned between **Britain** and **Russia**, as the weakened **Qajar dynasty** had lost control over much of the country. Into this political vacuum emerged **Reza Khan**, a Turkic Cossack officer in the Qajar military known for his ruthlessness.

With British backing, Reza Khan staged a **successful coup** against the Qajar regime, installing himself as the country's ruler. He subsequently adopted the name **Reza Shah Pahlavi**, a title suggested by the **British** to sever ties with the Ottoman legacy and evoke **pre-Islamic Persian heritage**. Between **1925 and 1935**, the official title **"Empire of Persia"** was used.

Under pressure from **Islamist and nationalist Azeri factions**, however, the regime officially changed the country's name to **"Iran"** in **1935**, invoking **Aryanist** and **pre-Islamic** imagery. This change coincided with the redrawing of provincial boundaries to **dismantle Kurdish identity**:

- **East Azerbaijan** (Tawrez (Tabriz)) and **West Azerbaijan** (Wirme (Urmia)) absorbed several Kurdish regions to strengthen Turkic-Azeri influence.
- Kurdish provinces such as **Fars** and **Ecbatana (Hamadan)** were renamed and reorganised to suppress Kurdish recognition.
- Kurdish toponyms were systematically replaced with **Persian or Turkic names**, erasing their historical identity.

Repression in Eastern Kurdistan

Although **Qajar rule** had ended, **policies of genocide, forced assimilation, and cultural suppression** against the Kurds intensified under Reza Shah. The regime banned **Kurdish dress**, **public use of the Kurdish language**, and **Kurdish publications**.

Reza Shah appointed **General Amir Ahmadi**, a fanatically anti-Kurdish Turk, as **military governor of Eastern Kurdistan**. Ahmadi implemented a reign of terror—through **mass killings, torture, and confiscation of Kurdish lands**—cementing Pahlavi control. Vast tracts of Kurdish farmland were seized and redistributed to **Turks in Wirme (Urmia), Tawrez (Tabriz), Salmas, Khoy, Ardewel (Ardabil), Maragheh, and Duwawan (Miyandoab)**, with official documentation.

The **wealth looted from the Kurds** allowed Amir Ahmadi to amass huge property holdings in Taran (Tehran) and Tawrez (Tabriz), including **nearly 500 houses** near Hasan Abad Square in Tehran.

Later Years and Succession

Following **World War II**, Reza Shah—who had expressed admiration for **Hitler**—was **deposed by the Allies** and exiled to **South Africa**, where he died in **1944**. His son, **Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi**, took the throne with **British support** and ruled until the **1979 Iranian Revolution**.

Although Mohammad Reza Shah modernised certain sectors and cultivated ties with the West, his reign was characterised by **corruption, authoritarianism, and continued suppression of Kurdish rights**. He was overthrown during the revolution, fled into exile, and died in Cairo in **1980**.

Background on the Pahlavi Family

Reza Shah was born in the **Cossack barracks of Mazandaran** to **Abbasqoli Pahlavi** and a Georgian concubine named **Georgiyah**. His early years were spent in menial labour, including cleaning latrines in the barracks.

Through connections and brutality, he rose within the **Russian-led Cossack Brigade**, participating in **massacres of Kurds in Lorestan and Kirmashan**, the suppression of

Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan in Tawrez (Tabriz), and the crushing of **Colonel Taqi Khan Pessian's** rebellion in Khorasan.

When the British proposed "Pahlavi" as his surname, Reza reportedly asked its meaning. The British replied that it was an **ancient Persian name**, useful for masking his **non-Iranian origins**. Ironically, once in power, he ordered **the destruction of all works** associated with the historical poet Mahmoud Pahlavi, forcing the poet's family to adopt a new surname.

4.16 – The Qadamkheir Rebellion (1925–1928)

Qadamkheir Qalawandi was the daughter of **Mir Qandi Qalawandi**, ruler of the **Kurdish principality of Lorestan** (autonomous from 1900–1928).

In **1925**, **Reza Shah Pahlavi** ordered the killing of **Shamarad Khan**, the last Mir of Lorestan and Qadamkheir's cousin. In response, Qadamkheir launched an armed **uprising in Eastern Lorestan**, declaring her struggle as a defence of **Kurdish identity** and demanding **Kurdish independence**.

The Revolt and Betrayal

Iranian forces retaliated with **massacres and village burnings** but failed to conquer Lorestan's mountainous strongholds. Turning to deceit, Reza Shah sent Qadamkheir a **Qur'an wrapped in silk** with a promise of **general amnesty**. Many rebels—trusting the sacred symbol—surrendered their weapons.

Only Qadamkheir and **17 loyal commanders** refused. That night, the surrendered rebels were **massacred**. The next day, the 17 were executed by firing squad.

Qadamkheir was **bound by her hair to a wild horse** and dragged until critically injured. Imprisoned in Tehran, she **refused to beg for mercy**. After seven days of **torture and untreated wounds**, she died in custody.

Legacy

Qadamkheir is remembered as a **fearless revolutionary** who gave her life for **Kurdistan's liberation**. Her uprising, though ultimately crushed by **1928**, remains a symbol of **Kurdish resistance against tyranny**.

Rulers of the Mir Qandi Qalawandi Dynasty

Leader Name	Years of Leadership (AD)	Key Events
Kika Qandil	1850–1900	Unified the Kurds of Lorestan; died naturally in 1900.
Zaki Qalawandi & Tahir Qalawandi	1900	Cousins; both martyred fighting Iranian forces at Zahid Shiri near Khorawa (Khorramabad).
Baba Khan Qalawandi	1925	Martyred resisting Reza Pahlavi's army.
Fazil Khan Qalawandi	1925	Martyred resisting Reza Pahlavi's army.
Shamrad Khan Qalawandi	1925	Martyred resisting Reza Pahlavi's army.
Qadamkheir Qalawandi	1925–1928	Led rebellion against Pahlavi rule; martyred in prison after torture.

Qadamkheir

4.17 – The Rebellion of Ihsan Nuri Pasha (1926–1930)

Ihsan Nuri Pasha (1892–1976) was a distinguished **Kurdish nationalist leader** and military officer whose career spanned service in the **Ottoman army** to leading one of the most significant Kurdish uprisings of the early 20th century. He is best remembered as the commander of the **Ararat Uprising** in **Northern Kurdistan**, a determined effort to establish an **independent Kurdish state**.

Early Life and Military Career

Born in **1892** in **Bitlis**, Northern Kurdistan, Ihsan Nuri was a member of the **Jalali tribal confederation**. He began his education at the **Gök Meydan Mosque** in Bitlis before attending the **Erzincan Military School**. He later entered the **Ottoman Military Academy**, graduating in **1910** as an officer.

While still a cadet, he became associated with the **Kurdish Student Association**, an early sign of his nationalist convictions. Following graduation, he served **33 months** in Ottoman military campaigns, including operations in **Albania** and **Yemen**.

During **World War I**, Ihsan Nuri served on the **Caucasus Front**, where he was wounded. After recovering, he was assigned to administrative duties in **Georgia**.

Political Awakening and Kurdish Nationalism

In the aftermath of World War I, Ihsan Nuri intensified his involvement in the **Kurdish national cause**. Operating in **Diyarbakir**, **Siirt**, and **Bitlis**, he worked to unite **Kurdish leaders** and support broader resistance movements.

In **February 1919**, he authored an article analysing **Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points**, which was published in the Kurdish journal *Jîn*, linking international principles of self-determination to the Kurdish struggle.

By **1926**, Ihsan Nuri had joined the **Khoybun Organisation** (*meaning "Independence"*), which emerged as a key force behind Kurdish uprisings against **Turkish occupation**. He participated in the **Khoybun Rebellion**, although it was ultimately suppressed.

The Ararat Uprising (1927–1930)

After the defeat of **Sheikh Said Piran's revolt** in 1925, many Kurdish fighters sought refuge in **Western Kurdistan (Syria)**, then under French mandate. It was here, in **1926**, that exiled Kurdish leaders formally founded the **Khoybun Committee**, with Ihsan Nuri Pasha assuming **military command**.

From **1927 to 1930**, the Khoybun forces launched **three major uprisings** in the **Ağrı (Ararat) region** against the Turkish Republic. Under Ihsan Nuri's leadership, a **civil administration** was established, headed by **Ibrahim Pasha**, to govern liberated territories.

On **27 October 1927**, the Kurdish administration **formally declared the independence of Kurdistan**, raising the **Kurdish flag on Mount Ararat** as a symbolic act of sovereignty.

The Flag of the Agri Rebellion

The Rebellion of Ihsan Nuri Pasha: Uprising Waves of 1926, 1927, and 1930

Ihsan Nuri Pasha (1892–1976) was a distinguished **Kurdish nationalist leader** and former **Ottoman military officer** who became one of the most important figures in the Kurdish struggle for independence in the early 20th century. He is best remembered as the commander of the **Ararat Uprising**, which unfolded in **three major waves between 1926 and 1930**.

Early Life and Military Background

Born in **Bitlis**, Northern Kurdistan, Ihsan Nuri belonged to the **Jalali tribal confederation**. He was educated at the **Gök Meydan Mosque** in Bitlis, later attending the **Erzincan Military School** and the **Ottoman Military Academy**, graduating in **1910** as an officer. While still a cadet, he joined the **Kurdish Student Association**, demonstrating early nationalist leanings.

He served in Ottoman military operations in **Albania** and **Yemen** before being deployed to the **Caucasus Front** during World War I, where he was wounded. Post-recovery, he was assigned to administrative duties in **Georgia**.

Following the war, Ihsan Nuri became an active proponent of the **Kurdish national cause**, publishing articles—such as his **1919 analysis of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points** in the Kurdish journal *Jîn*—and working to unite Kurdish leaders in **Diyarbakir**, **Siirt**, and **Bitlis**.

Formation of the Khoybun Organisation and the Ararat Uprising

In **1926**, after the suppression of the **Sheikh Said Piran Uprising**, many Kurdish fighters fled to **Western Kurdistan (Syria)**. There, Kurdish exiles formed the **Khoybun Committee** (*meaning "Independence"*), appointing Ihsan Nuri Pasha as **military commander**.

The **first wave** of the Ararat Uprising began in **1926**, when Ihsan Nuri organised a well-armed force trained in modern infantry tactics. His troops liberated **Mount Ararat**, **Bitlis**, **Van**, and much of the territory surrounding **Lake Van**. On **5 October 1926**, the **Birêya Heskey Telê** organisation joined the uprising, with support from **Sheikh Abdulqadir Jalal**. Kurdish fighters from **Ikhdar**, **Tenduruk**, **Erdiş**, **Chaldiran**, **Van**, **Botan**, **Bitlis**, and **Amed** participated in the rebellion.

The **second wave** in **1927** saw the Khoybun administration—led by **Ibrahim Pasha**—declare the **independence of Kurdistan** on **27 October 1927**, raising the **Kurdish flag on Mount Ararat**.

Turkish and Iranian Military Response

The Turkish government responded with **extreme brutality**. Under **Kemaleddin Sami Pasha**, the army massacred civilians across **Hakkari**, **Beytüşşebap**, **Şemdinan**, and **Van**—killing up to **10,000 Kurds** as far as **Chaldiran**. Even Iranian forces sympathetic to **Kemalist Turkey** attacked Kurdish fighters from the **Paradoj region**, highlighting the long-standing cooperation between the Turkish and Iranian states in suppressing Kurdish nationalism.

The Zilan Massacre and Final Suppression (1930)

The **third wave** reached its climax on **12–13 July 1930**, when the **Zilan Massacre** occurred. Turkish forces under **General Salih Omurtak** slaughtered an estimated **15,000 civilians** in the **Zilan Valley**, committing atrocities including the killing of **pregnant women**, the **dissection of fetuses**, the **rape of girls as young as 10–12**, and the torture of boys to death.

Across the region, the Turkish military destroyed **660 villages**, looted over **15,200 homes**, and forced thousands of Kurdish families into flight. Refugees who reached

Izmir were attacked by Turkish militias, stripped of their belongings, and subjected to humiliation and forced assimilation.

Notably, Kurdish commanders **Heskey Telê** and **Bavê Tojo** fought to the death on **Mount Ararat**, refusing to surrender despite repeated pleas to their families.

By **summer 1930**, Turkey had mobilised **66,000 troops** and **100 aircraft** to crush the uprising. Aerial bombardments and ground assaults led to the loss of all Kurdish-held territory. On **17 September 1930**, the rebellion was decisively defeated. Following the victory, Turkish forces executed over **10,000 Kurds** and marked a trench with the chilling inscription:

"Kurdistan and the Kurdish nation are buried here."

In **1984**, Kurdish fighters of the **PKK** destroyed this site, replacing the inscription with:

"The Kurdish uprising and the freedom movement of Kurdistan began here."

Impact and Historical Legacy

Positive Contributions:

- Ihsan Nuri Pasha established a **structured Kurdish military organisation**, uniting disparate nationalist forces.
- The uprising attracted **international attention** to the Kurdish cause, publicising Kurdish demands and suffering on a global stage.

Negative Consequences:

- The defeat led to **mass displacement**, the destruction of villages, and **cultural suppression**.
- It deepened mistrust between Kurds and the Turkish state, complicating future negotiations over autonomy or independence.

Key Reasons for Failure:

- **Military Inferiority:** The Kurds faced overwhelming Turkish manpower and superior **air power**.
- **Lack of International Support:** No major power intervened to support Kurdish independence.
- **Internal Division:** Rivalries and lack of coordination weakened the national movement.

Despite defeat, **Ihsan Nuri Pasha** remains a **symbol of Kurdish resistance**, his struggle embodying the determination for an **independent Kurdistan**.

Ihsan Nuri Pasha was assassinated in **Taran (Tehran)** on **25 March 1976**, at the doorstep of his home.

Ihsan Nuri Pasha and his wife Khajij Yashar

Ihsan Nuri Pasha was born in 1893 in the city of Bitlis and was assassinated on March 25, 1976, in Tehran, at the doorstep of his own home

4.18 – The Dersim Uprising of Seyid Riza (1937)

Seyid Riza (1863–1937) was a **prominent Kurdish Alevi-Zaza tribal leader** from the mountainous **Dersim region** in Northern Kurdistan. In **1937**, he led a determined **armed uprising for Kurdish independence** against the **occupying Turkish Republic**, demanding **recognition of Kurdistan's national identity** and an end to the policies of assimilation and oppression.

Background: Turkish Ethno-Nationalist Policies

Following the establishment of the **Republic of Turkey** in **1923**, **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk** implemented a rigid **Turkish ethno-nationalist programme** aimed at **forced Turkification** of all Kurds in Northern Kurdistan.

These policies included:

- **Imposing the Turkish language** as the sole language of education and public life.
- **Mass relocation** of Kurdish residents to Turkish-majority cities.
- **Seizure and redistribution of Kurdish lands** to Turkish settlers.
- **Formation of racist nationalist organisations** promoting anti-Kurdish ideology.
- **Exclusion of Kurds** from state institutions.

The overarching aim was to **erase Kurdish identity**, culture, and language from public life in both Northern Kurdistan and Turkey.

Prelude to the Uprising

From **1920 to 1937**, the Kurds of Dersim maintained a **degree of semi-autonomy** and resisted full subjugation by the Turkish state. They **refused conscription**, **rejected taxation**, and actively demanded **regional autonomy** for Northern Kurdistan.

In **1936**, Atatürk appointed **General Abdullah Alpdoğan** as regional commander with **full authority to eliminate Kurdish resistance**. Turkish forces were deployed across Dersim, **reinforcements were brought in**, and **warplanes conducted continuous bombardments** over the region.

Seyid Riza sought to avoid open conflict and sent his **son** as an envoy to negotiate peace. Alpdoğan, however, **arrested the envoy** and escalated the military campaign.

The Uprising and Key Events

By early **1937**, Kurdish forces under Seyid Riza had gained control over **Dersim, Erzincan, and Koçgiri**. A coalition of **local tribal leaders** coordinated a **successful ambush** on a Turkish military convoy, inflicting a significant defeat on the occupying forces.

In retaliation, the Turkish government orchestrated the **assassination of the Kurdish commander Ali Şêr** through betrayal by **Rehber**, a close associate of Seyid Riza. Rehber **beheaded Ali Şêr** and presented the head to Atatürk, receiving a large gold reward. The betrayal was short-lived—Rehber was later executed by the Turks and stripped of his possessions.

Ali Şêr was widely regarded as a **legendary military commander**, and even his wife, **Zerife**, fought alongside him in all battles for the liberation of Kurdistan.

Under **direct orders from Atatürk**, more than **25,000 Turkish soldiers**, supported by **aerial bombardment**, were deployed to crush the uprising. Despite being **outnumbered and poorly equipped**, the Kurdish forces fought tenaciously, inflicting heavy casualties in a series of confrontations throughout 1937.

Betrayal and Execution of Seyid Riza

In the autumn of **1937**, General Alpdoğan proposed **peace talks**—a calculated deception. Promising **Kurdish autonomy**, the Turkish state invited Seyid Riza to **Erzincan**. Upon arrival, Seyid Riza, his **16-year-old son**, and **eight commanders** were arrested. They were transferred to **Kharput (Elaziz)** and, after **eight days without trial**, executed on **15 October 1937** in **Seydare**.

Seyid Riza's son was **executed before his eyes**, followed by the killing of **Riza himself** and all **remaining family members**, including **infant grandchildren**.

The Dersim Genocide

Simultaneously, Turkish forces carried out **mass executions** and **widespread massacres** in **Dersim and Erzincan**, events recognised as one of the **largest genocides** against the Kurdish people in the 20th century.

Key facts:

- **Over 100,000 Kurds massacred**.
- **Over 100,000 forcibly deported** to Turkish cities.
- **Thousands of villages depopulated**.
- Even **women and children were burned alive**.
- **40,000 armed Kurdish fighters killed**.

Children of slain Kurdish families were taken to **Turkish state-run boarding schools**, indoctrinated with **anti-Kurdish ideology**, and raised to **believe they were Turkish**. Speaking Kurdish was **strictly forbidden**, and cultural identity was systematically erased.

Because most of Dersim's population followed the **Alevi faith**, the massacre has also been referred to as the **Dersim Genocide** or the **Alevi Genocide**.

Consequences and Reasons for Defeat

Consequences:

- The uprising continued briefly after Seyid Riza's death but was **fully suppressed** by **1938**.
- Massive loss of life, forced deportations, and **severe cultural destruction** followed.

Reasons for Failure:

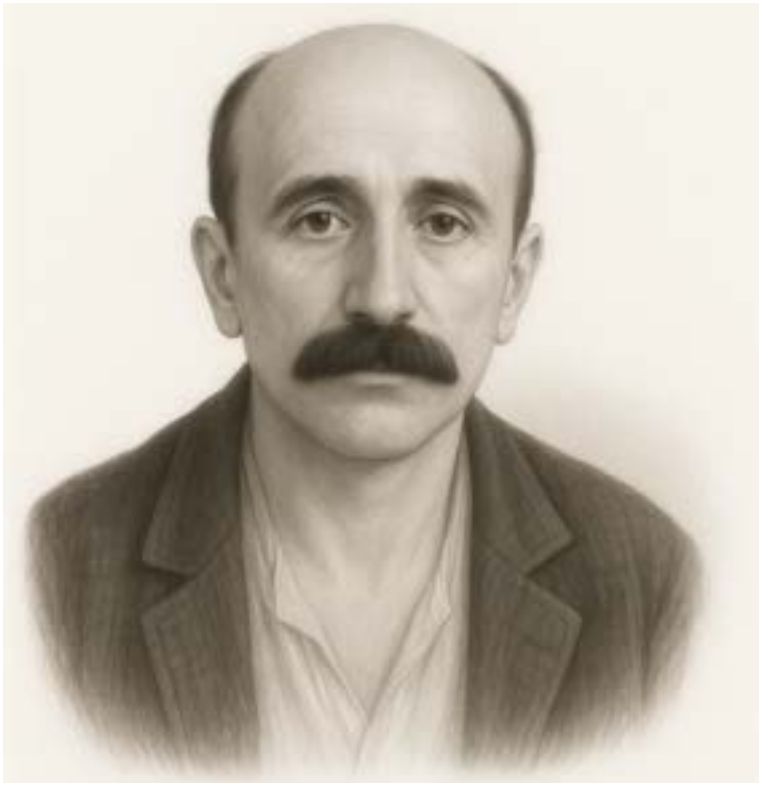
- **Military Imbalance:** Turkish forces possessed overwhelming manpower, advanced weaponry, and air superiority.
- **Betrayal During Negotiations:** The arrest and execution of Seyid Riza and his commanders crippled the resistance leadership.
- **Geographic Isolation:** Limited to the mountainous Dersim region, the uprising lacked external support and resources.

Legacy

Seyid Riza's final words before execution reflected **unwavering dedication** to the Kurdish cause and became a **rallying cry** for future generations.

The **Dersim Uprising** stands as one of the most **significant episodes** of Kurdish resistance against **Turkish occupation**—a testament to the Kurdish people's **sacrifice, resilience, and enduring pursuit of national identity and independence**.

Seyid Riza of Dersim



Ali Sher

Ali Sher and his wife Zerife

4.19 – The Second World War (1939–1945)

The **Second World War** was a **global conflict** fought between **1939 and 1945**, involving the **majority of the world's nations**. It remains the **deadliest war in human history**, with an estimated **70–85 million deaths**. While the war did not bring direct military campaigns into the core territories of Kurdistan, it nonetheless **inflicted significant harm on the Kurdish people**, causing **destruction of towns and villages**, **mass displacement**, and **tens of thousands of Kurdish deaths**, without yielding any political or national benefit to the Kurds.

Main Participants

The war was fought primarily between two military blocs:

- **The Allies:** United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, China, France, and other nations including Canada, Australia, and India.
- **The Axis Powers:** Nazi Germany (**Adolf Hitler**), Fascist Italy (**Benito Mussolini** until 1943), and Imperial Japan (**Emperor Hirohito** and military leaders).

Causes of the War

The origins of the conflict were shaped by **the punitive Treaty of Versailles (1919)**, which imposed severe economic and territorial penalties on Germany after World War I. The resulting instability fueled the **rise of fascism**, particularly in Germany, Italy, and Japan, setting them in ideological opposition to **democratic and communist states** allied against them.

Major Events

- **1939:** Germany's invasion of Poland triggered Britain and France's declaration of war.
- **1940:** Germany occupied France and began the **Battle of Britain**—a sustained aerial campaign.
- **1941:** Germany launched **Operation Barbarossa** against the Soviet Union; Japan attacked **Pearl Harbor**, bringing the United States into the war.
- **1942–1943:** Turning points included the Soviet victory at **Stalingrad** and the U.S. victory over Japan at the **Battle of Midway**.
- **1944:** Allied forces landed in France on **D-Day** and liberated Paris. Hitler committed suicide on **30 April 1945**, leading to Germany's surrender.
- **August 1945:** The U.S. dropped **atomic bombs** on Hiroshima (140,000 dead) and Nagasaki (70,000 dead), prompting Japan's surrender.

Impact on the Kurds and Kurdistan

While no major battles occurred within Kurdistan itself, the war's **geopolitical consequences** shaped Kurdish history:

- **Iraq** briefly aligned with Germany in 1941 but was reoccupied by the British.
- **Iran** was jointly occupied by Britain and the Soviet Union in 1941, affecting Eastern Kurdistan.
- **Turkey** remained officially neutral but was pressured by the Allies.
- The Soviet presence in Eastern Kurdistan laid the groundwork for the **Republic of Mahabad** in 1946.

4.20 – The Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad (1946)

The **Republic of Kurdistan**, commonly known as the **Republic of Mahabad**, was declared on **22 January 1946** in the city of Mahabad, Eastern Kurdistan. It represented the **first modern Kurdish state** and remains one of the most important milestones in the Kurdish struggle for self-determination.

Historical Context

During the Second World War, in **1942**, southern Iran was occupied by **U.S. and British forces**, while northern Iran and Eastern Kurdistan came under **Soviet control**. The Soviet Army, under **Joseph Stalin**, remained in the region for four years. This occupation provided the **political and military environment** for Kurdish nationalist mobilisation.

Formation of Kurdish Political Organisation

- **4 September 1943:** The **Komala Zhiyanewey Kurd** (*Society for the Revival of the Kurds*) was founded in Mahabad. Its goal was **national liberation from foreign occupation**.
- **Qazi Muhammad** soon joined and became its leader.
- **16 July 1945:** Komala transformed into the **Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)**, with the objective of **achieving full Kurdish independence**.

Declaration of the Republic

With strong support from the **Mukriyan region**, Qazi Muhammad proclaimed the **Republic of Kurdistan** on **22 January 1946**.

- **11 February 1946:** The Republic's **parliament** was sworn in.
- **23 April 1946:** A **treaty of friendship** was signed with the Azerbaijani People's Government.
- **Women** participated in politics and held public office.
- The Republic maintained **its own army**, led by **General Mustafa Barzani**, and operated under **Soviet military and political support** for eleven months.

Fall of the Republic

In late 1946, the Soviets struck an agreement with the Iranian monarchy and **withdrew their forces** from Iran and Eastern Kurdistan. This left Mahabad **militarily vulnerable**.

- The Iranian Pahlavi regime first crushed the **Azerbaijani People's Government** in Tawrez (Tabriz), then advanced into Kurdistan.
- To avoid mass civilian casualties, **Qazi Muhammad ordered no armed resistance**.
- **17 December 1946:** Iranian forces occupied Mahabad and dissolved the Republic.
- **22 January 1947:** Qazi Muhammad, his brother **Sadr Qazi**, and cousin **Seyfi Qazi** were **publicly hanged** in Mahabad's main square.

Approximately **20 senior leaders** of the Republic in Mahabad, Saqqez, and Bukan were also executed. Mustafa Barzani's forces withdrew toward the Soviet Union, crossing the **Aras River** after three months of fighting.

Positive Legacies

- **Kurdish Language and Education:** Schools taught in Kurdish; literature, journalism, and music flourished.

- **National Symbols:** The Kurdish flag was raised; Kurdish identity was officially recognised.
- **Military Organisation:** The Republic maintained a functioning army supported by Peshmerga units.
- **International Linkages:** Received Soviet military assistance and solidarity from other Kurdish regions.
- **Unity Across Borders:** Barzani brought fighters from Southern Kurdistan to defend the Republic.

Key Weaknesses and Reasons for Collapse

- **Lack of Sustained International Support:** Soviet withdrawal left the Republic defenceless.
- **Iranian Military Superiority:** The Pahlavi army's overwhelming manpower and weaponry ensured rapid suppression.
- **Internal Kurdish Disunity:** Some Kurdish regions did not participate; a minority sided with Iran.
- **Limited Resources:** Chronic shortages of funds and modern weaponry weakened the Republic.
- **International Betrayal:** Western powers tacitly approved Iran's suppression of the Kurdish movement.

Legacy

Although it lasted **less than one year**, the Republic of Mahabad became an **enduring symbol of Kurdish national aspiration**. It inspired subsequent **Kurdish uprisings** in all four parts of Kurdistan and continues to represent the vision of **self-determination, cultural rights, and political independence** that drives Kurdish movements today.

Pêşewa Qazî Mihemed

Pêshawa

Saifi Qazi

Sadri Qazi

The Flag of the Republic of Kurdistan

4.21 – The Rebellion of General Mustafa Barzani (1961)

Mullah Mustafa Barzani (1903–1979) was a **charismatic nationalist leader** and the long-time head of the **Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)**, whose decades of military and political struggle profoundly shaped the Kurdish national movement in **Southern Kurdistan**. Revered as a symbol of **Kurdish pride, resistance, and self-determination**, his campaigns were marked by **military confrontations, shifting alliances, and complex negotiations** with both regional and global powers.

Early Life and Rise to Leadership

Born **14 March 1903** in **Barzan**, Southern Kurdistan, Mustafa Barzani came from a prominent Kurdish family. His elder brother, **Sheikh Ahmad Barzani**, led the early Barzan resistance movement against British and Iraqi rule.
Between **1920 and 1940**, Barzani took part in **multiple uprisings** against **British occupation forces** and the **Iraqi monarchy**, advocating for **Kurdish self-rule**. His **first major armed campaign** in **1943** against the Iraqi state and its British allies ended in military defeat, forcing Barzani and his followers into the mountains to wage guerrilla resistance.

Exile in the Soviet Union (1947–1958)

Following the **fall of the Republic of Mahabad** in 1946, Barzani and his Peshmerga fighters retreated through **Southern Kurdistan** to the Soviet Union, where they remained in exile for over a decade.

- While Soviet support for Kurdish independence was **limited**, Barzani's time in the USSR provided **military training**, **political exposure**, and **international connections** that would later influence his leadership.

Return to Iraq and the 1961 Uprising

In **1958**, the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown by **General Abd al-Karim Qasim**, who initially promised **autonomy for the Kurds**. Barzani returned from exile to lead the Kurdish movement, and **Peshmerga forces** expanded their control in **Southern Kurdistan**.

- When Baghdad **failed to honour its autonomy promises**, tensions escalated.
- On **11 September 1961**, Barzani launched a **full-scale uprising** against the Iraqi regime, liberating most of **Southern Kurdistan**.

Peace Agreement and Breakdown (1970–1974)

After years of fighting, Barzani and Iraqi President **Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr** signed the **11 March 1970 Peace Agreement**, which **granted Kurdish autonomy on paper** and allowed Barzani to govern much of Southern Kurdistan.

- However, Baghdad **delayed and manipulated implementation**, while secretly preparing to weaken Kurdish power.
- By **1974**, after repeated violations of the agreement, Barzani resumed **armed resistance**, this time with **overt Iranian military and financial support**.

Collapse of the Uprising (1975)

The **Algiers Agreement** between **Iraq and Iran** in March 1975 abruptly ended Iranian aid to the Kurds.

- Deprived of supplies and surrounded by the Iraqi army, Barzani's forces collapsed.
- Thousands of Kurds were killed; many fled to Iran or became refugees.

- Barzani went into **final exile in the United States**, where he lived until his death in 1979.

Aftermath and the Anfal Campaign

The failure of the uprising left the Kurdish movement **fractured**. Rivalries between the **KDP** and the newly formed **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)** escalated into **civil conflict**.
By the late 1980s, Saddam Hussein's regime launched the **Anfal campaign**—a genocidal operation involving **chemical weapons**, **mass executions**, and the destruction of hundreds of Kurdish villages—killing over **182,000 Kurds** and displacing many more.

Positive Legacy

- **Symbol of Resistance:** Barzani embodied Kurdish resilience and commitment to national rights.
- **International Awareness:** His leadership drew global attention to the Kurdish question, especially after Anfal and the **Halabja chemical attack**.
- **Foundation for Autonomy:** Although he did not achieve independence, his struggle laid the groundwork for the **Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)** established after the 1991 Gulf War.

Negative Outcomes and Limitations

- **Internal Divisions:** His leadership often deepened rivalries among Kurdish factions, particularly between the **KDP** and **PUK**.
- **Reliance on External Powers:** Dependence on Iranian aid proved disastrous when support was withdrawn in 1975.

- **Failure to Secure Independence:** Despite decades of struggle, Barzani was unable to unify all Kurdish factions or sustain international backing sufficient to defeat the Iraqi state.

Reasons for Failure to Achieve Independence

1. **Lack of Kurdish Unity:** Persistent political and tribal rivalries undermined national cohesion.
2. **Limited International Support:** Aid from the Soviet Union and Iran was inconsistent and politically driven.
3. **Iraqi Regime's Military Strength:** The Ba'athist regime, under **Saddam Hussein** and **Ali Hassan al-Majid**, wielded overwhelming force and ruthlessly targeted Kurdish civilians.

General Mustafa Barzani

4.22 – The Algiers Agreement (1975)

The **Algiers Agreement**, signed in **March 1975** in Algiers, was a pivotal geopolitical accord between **Iran** and **Iraq**, with **Algerian President Houari Boumédiène** mediating the negotiations. Although the agreement was officially between Taran (Tehran) and Baghdad, **representatives from Turkey, Syria, the United States, Britain, and Algeria** were present at the summit where the deal was finalized.

This agreement **effectively nullified** the **March 11, 1970 Autonomy Accord** between the Iraqi government and the Kurds of **Southern Kurdistan**, erasing the promises of self-rule previously granted to the Kurdish people.

The signatories reached a **shared understanding** that the **Kurdish revolutionary movement posed a common threat** and agreed to **coordinate politically, militarily, and in intelligence operations** to suppress Kurdish aspirations across all parts of Kurdistan.

Key provisions included:

- **Cross-Border Military Access:** Both sides permitted one another to **penetrate up to 10 kilometers into Kurdish territories** to establish border outposts and pursue Kurdish fighters.
- **Mutual Intelligence Sharing:** Joint coordination in **locating, capturing, and suppressing Kurdish revolutionaries**.
- **Unified Counter-Kurdish Strategy:** Commitment from all participating states to **undermine the Kurdish national movement** through military operations and political isolation.

The **Algiers Agreement** not only ended Iranian support for the Kurdish uprising in Iraq—leading to the collapse of **Mustafa Barzani's 1974–1975 revolt**—but also marked one of the most damaging moments in modern Kurdish history, as it demonstrated the **willingness of regional and global powers to sacrifice Kurdish rights for strategic and economic gains**.

4.23 – The Uprising of Ahmad Tawfiq (Abdullah Ishaqi), 1950

In 1950, a cadre of revolutionary youth from Eastern Kurdistan, inspired by the ideals of Peshawa Qazi Muhammad and the brief but enduring legacy of the Republic of Kurdistan (1946), launched a clandestine socio-political movement against the occupying Iranian state.

The uprising's leadership emerged from multiple centers of resistance. In Mahabad, key figures included **Ahmad Tawfiq**, **Ghani Bolurian**, **Soleiman Mo'eini**, **Amir Qazi**, and **Esmail Sharifzadeh**; in Saqqez, **Mamosta Rashid Hosseini**; in Piranshahr, **Abdullah Zaki**; and in Sardasht, **Mamosta Khidr Abbasi** and **Mamosta Aware (Ahmad Shalmashi)**. Together, they consolidated the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) under their unified command. Ahmad Tawfiq was soon elected Secretary of the Party.

Ahmad Tawfiq (Abdullah Ishaqi)

Operating under the constant threat of arrest and execution, the KDP's activities in Eastern Kurdistan were forced into secrecy. This underground struggle continued until 1954, when intensifying Iranian military and police pressure compelled Tawfiq and several comrades to relocate to Southern Kurdistan. There, they adopted guerrilla

warfare as the primary mode of resistance, maintaining active networks both inside and outside Eastern Kurdistan.

In 1957, the Party dispatched **Dr. Abdulrahman Ghassemlou** to Taran (Tehran) to establish connections with Kurdish students. There, both he and his cousin **Esmail Ghassemlou** were arrested by SAVAK, the Iranian secret police. Dr. Ghassemlou was released within 24 hours after pledging cooperation with SAVAK—a pledge he later claimed to Tawfiq was a deliberate deception to secure his release. However, under SAVAK pressure, Esmail Ghassemlou revealed the identities of **250 high-ranking KDP members**. This led to a mass wave of arrests in which only a few, such as Ghani Bolurian and Aziz Yousefi, resisted imprisonment for the full **25 years**.

From this point forward, trust between Tawfiq's leadership and Dr. Ghassemlou was irreparably broken. Evidence of collaboration between Ghassemlou and external powers mounted, yet his political maneuvering—particularly through ties to the Iraqi Communist Party and Iran's pro-Soviet Tudeh Party—enabled him to avoid internal prosecution. By leveraging Iraqi Ba'athist patronage, he secured employment in Baghdad's Ministry of Finance, an unusual appointment for an Eastern Kurd and one which aroused suspicion within nationalist circles.

The **Second KDP Congress** was convened in 1964 in Suneh, near Qaladze, reaffirming Ahmad Tawfiq as General Secretary and expelling Dr. Ghassemlou on charges of collaboration with SAVAK and betrayal of the Kurdish cause. Shortly thereafter, Salah Muhtadi broke away to form the "Kurdistan Liberation Party," later exposed as a SAVAK agent tasked with sowing division, before openly serving Iranian intelligence in Mukriyan.

Tawfiq's dedication to the liberation of Kurdistan extended beyond Eastern Kurdistan. He fought alongside **Mulla Mustafa Barzani** in Southern Kurdistan against the Iraqi regime, advocating unity among all Kurdish revolutionary movements. Yet by 1968, Barzani's rapprochement with Iran brought fatal consequences: prominent Eastern Kurdish leaders, including **Sediq Henjiri** and **Mulla Rahim Marjalani**, were arrested and disappeared; others, such as **Soleiman Mo'eini** and **Khalil Shubash**, were handed

to Iran and executed. The same fate befell **Salih Lajani** and two comrades, executed publicly by SAVAK at Jaldyani near Khaneh.

Fearing extradition to Iran, Tawfiq left for Baghdad in late 1969. Meanwhile, Dr. Ghassemlou, with allies **Karim Hisami**, **Mulla Hassan Rastegar**, and **Mulla Abdullah Hassanzadeh**, plotted to remove him permanently. In 1971, during a meeting of 32 KDP cadres in Koya, assassination was proposed but rejected by most attendees. Nevertheless, Ghassemlou continued to press his plan through Iraqi intelligence channels, leading to Tawfiq's arrest and imprisonment in Abu Ghraib. Eyewitnesses, including **Taheri** and **Ghafouri**, testified that Tawfiq was tortured and ultimately killed by immersion in acid, on the joint orders of Dr. Ghassemlou and Saddam Hussein. His remains were never recovered.

From 1950 to 1971, Ahmad Tawfiq stood as the uncompromising architect of Eastern Kurdistan's modern national movement. He famously declared:

"Kurdistan is my prison, and until Kurdistan is free, I will not rest."

After his murder, Dr. Ghassemlou convened a secret Baghdad meeting in 1972—dubbed the "Third Party Congress"—creating the "Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran" (KDPI) at the insistence of the Ba'ath regime, which appointed him Secretary.

The **collapse of Barzani's movement in 1975** brought another wave of betrayal. In the "Rania Betrayal," **55 KDP leaders** were handed to Iran through a coordinated plan involving Ghassemlou, Hassanzadeh, Rastegar, Haddad, Siraji, Hisami, and Saddam Hussein. Many remained in prison until 1979, when the fall of the Shah allowed Kurdish forces to free them.

Tawfiq's surviving comrades refused to join the Ba'ath-backed KDPI, instead forming the **Kurdistan Unity Association**, committed to resisting Iranian occupation without foreign patronage. Many paid with their lives.

Dr. Ghassemlou's political stance in later years revealed stark divergence from Tawfiq's nationalist principles. In the aftermath of the 1988 **Halabja chemical massacre**, he

publicly attributed the atrocity to Iran and downplayed Kurdish demands to the right of basic linguistic education, ignoring the magnitude of Kurdish suffering. When questioned about Tawfiq's assassination, he bluntly stated:

"Ahmad Tawfiq was more capable than I. Wherever he went, he could build a stronger party than mine. I removed him to secure my leadership."

The ranks of those betrayed included some of the most steadfast martyrs of the Kurdish liberation struggle:

- **Mamosta Rashid Hosseini (Shaida-ye Kurdistan)** – KDP Central Committee member, Secretary of the Kurdistan Unity Association, and President of the Kurdistan Farmers' Union; killed in battle, 17 August 1979.
- **Abdullah Zaki (Qandil)** – Senior KDP commander, martyred 28 August 1982.
- **Mamosta Salar Hawrami (Ali Qotbi)** – Killed in clashes with Iraqi-backed forces, 29 July 1980.
- **Mamosta Khidr Qader (Khidr Kurdistani)** – Sardasht-born leader forced into exile.
- **Qader Agha** – Died under torture in SAVAK custody, 1975.

Ahmad Tawfiq's legacy remains that of an incorruptible revolutionary who placed the liberation of Kurdistan above all personal ambition. His death marked not only the loss of a leader but also the silencing of one of the clearest voices for Kurdish unity in the 20th century.

Revolutionaries from Left to Right: Salar Hawrami (Ali Qutbi), Amir Qazi, Ahmad Tawfiq (Abdullah Ishaqi), Rashid Husseini (Martyr of Kurdistan), Abdullah Zaki (Qandil).

4.24 – The Uprising in Northern Kurdistan under the Leadership of Abdullah Öcalan (Apo), 1970s

In **Northern Kurdistan**, under the occupation of the **Turkish state**, the **use of the word "Kurd"** and the **Kurdish language** was **strictly prohibited**. Any individual who spoke publicly about Kurdish identity was subject to **immediate arrest, imprisonment, and severe torture** by Turkish authorities. In this **repressive and volatile climate**, a young and politically conscious university student named **Abdullah Öcalan (Apo)** began developing a profound **awareness of Kurdish national identity** and the urgent need for organized resistance.

Öcalan understood that **the occupying powers had systematically dismantled Kurdish society**, seeking to erase the Kurdish nation's existence. Convinced that **only revolutionary struggle could revive the Kurdish cause**, he began mobilizing like-minded students and activists.

Formation of the Apoist Group

While studying at **Ankara University**, Öcalan formed close political bonds with **Kamal Pir, Cemîl Bayik, Mazlum Doğan, Muhammad Khayri Durmush**, and **Haki Karer**.

- **First Meeting:** On **March 21, 1974**, in a basement in Ankara, the group decided to form a **revolutionary organization** dedicated to the liberation of Kurdistan.
- **Second Meeting:** In **1976**, in the Dikmen neighborhood of Ankara, the group resolved to **shift the struggle from Ankara back to Kurdistan**. Each member was assigned to a different Kurdish city to begin **grassroots organizing** and **raising political awareness** among the people.

That same year, they formed the **"Ideological Group"**, and their movement became popularly known as **"Apoists."**

Early Losses and the Founding of the PKK

In **1976**, **Aydın Gül**, a committed member of the group, was assassinated in **Dersim** by Turkish leftist factions.

On **November 27, 1978** (not 1976, based on PKK historical records), the **first congress** of the Apoists was convened in the village of **Fîs**, near **Lîce** in the **Amed (Diyarbakir)** region. At this congress, they **officially founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**, with Abdullah Öcalan as its leader.

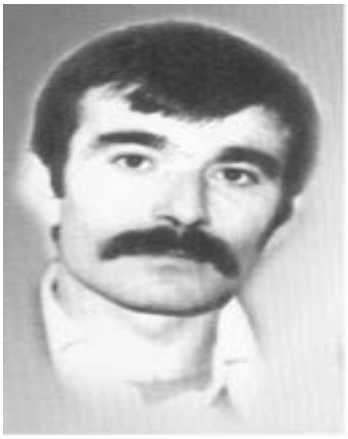
On **April 18, 1977**, **Haki Karer**, a close friend and comrade of Öcalan, was assassinated in **Antep (Gaziantep)** by members of the Kurdish **Pesheng Party**—marking the first major internal betrayal faced by the movement.

Imprisonment and Acts of Resistance

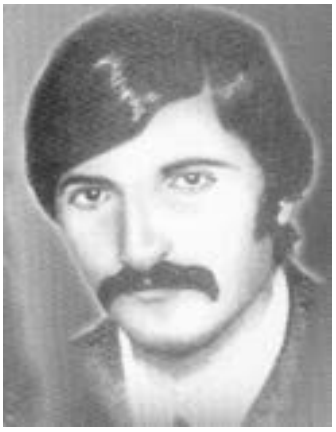
In **1979**, **Kamal Pir**, one of Öcalan's earliest and most trusted comrades—and later the **first official leader** of the PKK after Öcalan—was captured alongside **Muhammad Khayri Durmush** in **Harput (Elazığ)**. Both were imprisoned in the notorious **Diyarbakir Prison**, infamous for its systematic torture and dehumanization of Kurdish political prisoners.

Mazlum Doğan, a member of the PKK Central Committee, became a symbol of defiance when, on **Newroz (March 21) 1982**, he **set himself on fire** in prison, declaring that surrender was not an option. His **act of self-immolation** inspired an entire generation of Kurdish resistance fighters.

Later that year, on **July 14, 1982**, **Kamal Pir** and **Muhammad Khayri Durmush**, under the slogan **"Freedom or Death"**, began a **hunger strike** to protest the torture and repression in Diyarbakir Prison. After more than **two months of starvation**, both men died, joining the ranks of **Kurdish martyrs** whose sacrifices became rallying cries for the liberation movement.



Kamal Pir



Khayri Durmush

Mazlum Doğan

Apo's Relocation and the Commencement of Armed Struggle

In **1979**, amid escalating repression in **Northern Kurdistan**, **Abdullah Öcalan (Apo)** was compelled to **leave Turkey** and relocate to **Syria and Lebanon** in order to continue the revolutionary struggle.

The **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**, founded with the objective of securing **independence for all of Kurdistan**, maintained its struggle along these lines. On **15 August 1984**, under the command of **Agîd (Mahsum Korkmaz)**—the General Commander of the **Kurdistan Liberation Army**—the PKK launched its **first major armed offensive** against the **Turkish state**.

Agîd, a native of **Farqîn (Silvan)** in the **Amed (Diyarbakir)** region, was later **martyred** on **28 March 1985** during a battle against Turkish forces in the **Gever mountains**.

Agîd (Mahsum Korkmaz)

Ceasefire Initiatives and the Role of President Turgut Özal

In **1993**, the PKK declared a **unilateral ceasefire**. In response, Turkish President **Turgut Özal**—himself of Kurdish origin and sympathetic to the cause—dispatched a **parliamentary delegation of Kurdish MPs** from Northern Kurdistan, accompanied by **Jalal Talabani** and several journalists, to **Damascus** to open dialogue with Öcalan. However, before the delegation could return, **President Özal died suddenly**—officially of heart failure—effectively ending this attempt at peaceful resolution.

Significantly, after **68 years of prohibition**, it was **President Özal** who in **1991 lifted the ban on speaking Kurdish** in Turkey and Northern Kurdistan.

Exile, Diplomatic Attempts, and International Hostility

In **1988**, under **NATO pressure** and **U.S. influence**, Turkey compelled Syria to expel Öcalan from Damascus. On **9 October 1998**, Öcalan departed Syria for **Greece**, later travelling to **Russia** and **Italy** in an effort to seek a **peaceful, diplomatic solution** to the Kurdish question.

While in Italy, he called for an **international conference** on the Kurdish issue, but **world powers**—particularly the **U.S. and Germany**—rejected his proposal, prioritizing economic and geopolitical alliances with the **occupiers of Kurdistan** over Kurdish rights. Facing mounting diplomatic pressure, Italian authorities forced Öcalan to leave. His subsequent attempts to find refuge in various countries were blocked; his flights were denied landing rights across Europe.

Öcalan eventually travelled through **Russia**, **Tajikistan**, **Greece**, and **Kenya**, where on **15 February 1999**, in an operation involving **Israel's Mossad** and the **U.S. CIA**, he was **kidnapped** and handed over—**semi-unconscious**—to Turkish authorities.

Mass Protests and Brutal Repression

Öcalan's capture triggered **mass protests** across all four parts of Kurdistan and within the Kurdish diaspora. Over **150 Kurds committed self-immolation** in protest against the perceived **hypocrisy of the international community**.

In **Eastern Kurdistan**, protests were met with lethal force by the **Iranian regime**. On a single day in **Sanandaj**, **27 civilians were killed**, including two couples on their wedding day. Two more were killed in **Wirme (Urmia)**, and dozens injured or arrested.

In **Germany**, Kurdish demonstrators outside the **Israeli Embassy** were fired upon by embassy personnel, killing **four Kurdish youths** and injuring many others.

The Evolution of Kurdish Political Parties in Northern Kurdistan

Following the PKK's rise, Kurdish activists established the **People's Labor Party (HEP)** on **7 June 1990**, but it was swiftly **banned** by the Turkish state. Successor parties—including the **Democracy Party (DEP)** in **1992**, the **People's Democracy Party (HADEP)** in **1996**, the **Democratic People's Party (DEHAP)**, and later the **Democratic Society Party (DTP)**—faced similar repression.

The DTP, which in **2007** won **21 parliamentary seats** and controlled **99 municipalities** in Northern Kurdistan, was banned, followed by mass arrests of Kurdish MPs and local leaders. In **2010**, the **Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)** was founded, winning **36 seats** in the 2011 elections despite state repression, only to be met with further mass arrests, including co-chairs **Selahattin Demirtaş** and **Figen Yüksekdağ** in **2016**.

In **2023**, after the **BDP** was banned, Kurds founded the **Party of Equality and Democracy (DEM)**, which won **62 seats** in the Turkish parliament and regained control of **10 provincial municipalities** in Northern Kurdistan.

The Peace Process and Dissolution of the PKK

On **21 March 2013**, Öcalan initiated a **peace process** with the Turkish state, but in **2015** the Turkish military unilaterally ended the truce. On **27 February 2025**, Öcalan called on the PKK to **disarm** in pursuit of a peaceful resolution. On **12 May 2025**, following its **12th Congress** and nearly **50 years of armed struggle**, the **PKK dissolved itself**, endorsing Öcalan's call for peace.

Despite this, the Turkish state has **taken no substantive steps toward reconciliation**, continuing its **historic policy of suppression** under the guise of "peace," aiming ultimately to dismantle the Kurdish national movement.

Apo's Imprisonment and Enduring Influence

Since **1999**, Abdullah Öcalan has been held in **İmralı Prison**, now marking **27 years in isolation**. Despite his imprisonment, he remains a **central figure in Kurdish political thought** and a **symbol of resistance**.

The **crimes committed by Turkish authorities** against Kurdish civilians—including **mutilation, beheading, and the burning of bodies**—reflect the depth of state hostility toward Kurdish identity.

Apo (Abdullah Öcalan), during his trial in the Turkish military court in 1999, was sentenced and imprisoned. He has now spent 27 years in the high-security İmralı Prison near Istanbul. Despite this long imprisonment, he has managed to maintain his charisma as a Kurdish leader and continues to defend both himself and the Kurdish national identity.

The crimes committed by the fascist Turkish authorities against the Kurdish people are so severe that even in death, they do not allow dignity to Kurdish victims. In many cases, after killing them, they go as far as mutilating, beheading, dismembering their bodies, and setting their corpses on fire.

Extension of the Struggle to Other Parts of Kurdistan

The PKK has consistently extended its **organizational and logistical support** to other Kurdish regions. In **2004**, the **Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK)** was established in the **Qandil Mountains** to defend the people of **Eastern Kurdistan**. Within a short period, PJAK became a **major resistance force** against the **Iranian regime**, symbolizing the transnational unity of the Kurdish struggle.

4.25 – The 1991 Uprising in Southern Kurdistan

In the **summer of 1990**, the **Ba'athist Iraqi regime** launched a **sudden and unjustified invasion of Kuwait**. In response, **global powers**, operating under the **United Nations** and led by the **United States**, declared war on Iraq. This conflict, however, was **driven not by humanitarian motives** or the defence of Kuwait's people, but rather by the **pursuit of control over oil resources** and the **geopolitical balance** in the region.

On **17 January 1991**, the military offensive against Iraq began, continuing until **28 February 1991**. After **41 days of war**, and at the cost of **over 100,000 deaths** and **hundreds of thousands injured or displaced**, the Iraqi regime **collapsed in Kuwait** and was forced to withdraw.

The Spark of the Kurdish Uprising

By early 1991, **Iraq's grip on Southern Kurdistan had been severely weakened**. Recognising the opportunity, the **Kurdish people rose in rebellion**. The **uprising began on 5 March 1991** in the city of **Ranya** and rapidly spread across Southern Kurdistan. Within weeks, **the entire region was liberated** from Iraqi occupation. On **Newroz (21 March) 1991**, **Kirkuk** was liberated by Kurdish forces.

The people of Southern Kurdistan **believed that the U.S. and other international powers**—just as they had intervened in Kuwait—would support the Kurds against Saddam Hussein. However, the **United Nations**, fearing the emergence of an **autonomous Kurdish authority**, refused such support and instead **permitted the Iraqi regime to strike back**.

The Iraqi Counter-Offensive and Mass Displacement

On **15 April 1991**, and in full view of the international community, the Iraqi regime **bombarded Kurdish cities**, despite these areas being covered under **UN-designated**

no-fly zones. Saddam's forces threatened to deploy **chemical weapons**, killing **over 10,000 Kurds** in the attacks.

The Iraqi army reoccupied key areas, including **Kirkuk and Mosul**, forcing **over two million Kurds** to flee toward **Eastern and Northern Kurdistan**.

Both **Turkey and Iran closed their borders** to the refugees. In the **Tamarchiyan border region** near Piranshahr, **Iranian border guards opened fire**, killing and wounding dozens. **Turkish gendarmes** in Silopi and Şemdinli also fired on Kurdish refugees, killing and injuring many. Hundreds more **died from landmines**, exposure to **freezing temperatures**, or starvation during the flight.

The Limited No-Fly Zone

Under pressure, the **United Nations** eventually imposed a **no-fly zone above the 36th parallel**, preventing Iraqi aircraft from entering the provinces of **Hawler (Erbil), Duhok, and Sulaymaniyah**, which were placed under **international protection**. However, **Kirkuk and Mosul were excluded**, leaving **one-third of Southern Kurdistan under Iraqi control**.

The Political Leadership's Return and Betrayal

At the time of the uprising, the leaders of Southern Kurdistan's main political parties were **in exile in Iran**. Upon the liberation of the region, they **returned hurriedly**—in a symbolic act of subservience, some even **kissing Saddam Hussein's portrait**—and **traded the uprising's gains for personal power**.

They established a **joint parliament** composed only of **party-affiliated representatives**, which quickly collapsed due to **internal disputes over power-sharing**. By the mid-1990s, **Jalal Talabani** (PUK) and **Masoud Barzani** (KDP) had plunged the region into a **four-year civil war**, killing **over 10,000 Kurds**.

The outcome was a **de facto partition**:

- **Sulaymaniyah** came under **PUK control**, backed by **Iran**.
- **Hawler (Erbil)** was held by the **KDP**, supported by **Iraq**.

The Flag of Kurdistan

Foreign Intelligence and the Weakening of Kurdish Sovereignty

This internal war transformed Southern Kurdistan into a **battleground for foreign intelligence agencies** and **militias** representing all **occupying powers of Kurdistan**.

The **Kurdish armed forces** have **never enjoyed full sovereignty**. In contrast, **foreign states have freely stationed their own military and intelligence networks** in the region.

A notable example occurred on **31 August 1996**, when, unable to defeat the PUK, the KDP **invited Saddam Hussein's army**—the same forces responsible for the **Anfal genocide**—to retake Hawler (Erbil). Hundreds of **Peshmerga fighters** were killed, and **Hawler (Erbil) and Sulaymaniyah** came under **joint Iraqi–KDP control**. The **PUK**, in

turn, recaptured Sulaymaniyah with the aid of **Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**, effectively placing the city under **Iranian intelligence influence**.

Corruption, Exploitation, and External Influence

For **over three decades**, the **Barzani** and **Talabani** families, through their respective parties (**KDP/P.D.K** and **PUK/Y.N.K**), have **exploited Southern Kurdistan's resources**, transferring vast sums to **foreign banks** rather than investing in **infrastructure, development, or national defence**.

Southern Kurdistan has been turned into a **base of operations for Islamist and nationalist forces from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq**, operating under the guise of **religion, culture, education, military cooperation, and commerce**.

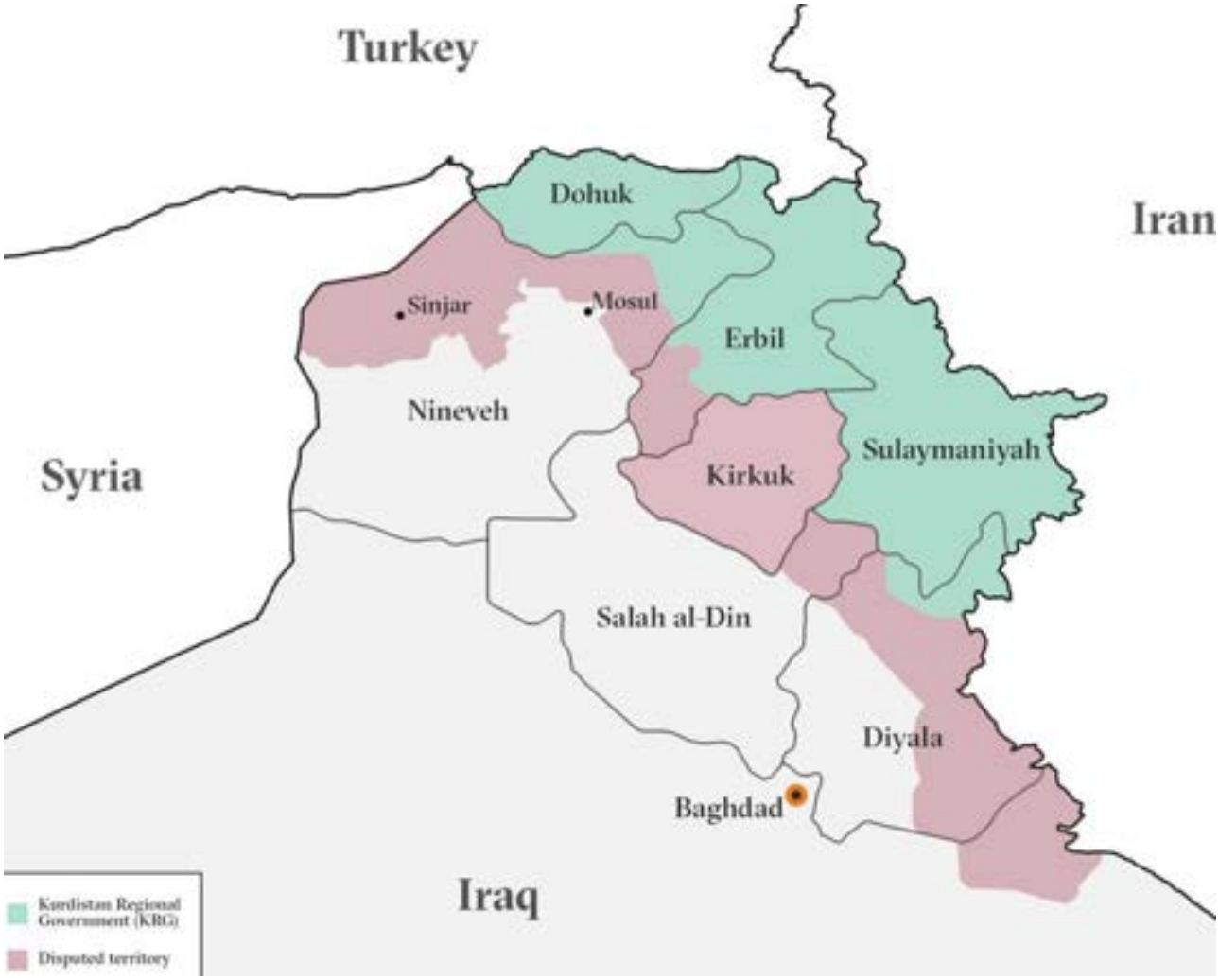
Through **universities and "cultural" programs**, these powers have targeted **Kurdish youth** with ideological indoctrination. Many participants are **children of Kurdish officials** with **foreign intelligence ties**, given privileged access to these institutions.

The façade of Governance

The so-called **Kurdistan Parliament** and **regional government**—controlled by the **KDP and PUK**—function primarily to **legitimize their own rule**. History shows that if an **independent, democratically elected Kurdish authority** were to emerge—one that truly represented **Kurdish national interests**—the KDP and PUK would side with **foreign occupiers** to undermine and destroy it.

This reality underscores the ongoing **fragility of Southern Kurdistan's autonomy**, where the absence of foreign armies has not translated into genuine **self-determination**, but rather into **entrenched factionalism** and **external dependency**.

Jalal Talabani and Masoud Barzani



Map of Southern Kurdistan. The brown area is currently occupied by the Iraqi authorities.

4.26 – The Kurdish Uprising in Red Kurdistan (1992)

In the aftermath of the First World War, a small portion of Kurdistan came under Russian administration. Following the Ottoman assault on Northern Kurdistan in 1915, tens of thousands of Yezidi (Zoroastrian) Kurds were displaced, many seeking refuge in the territory that later became known as Red Kurdistan, as well as in other parts of the Soviet Union.

Under the early Soviet system, all recognized nationalities were formally granted cultural rights, and for a brief period, the Kurds enjoyed limited autonomy within Red Kurdistan. However, this period of self-administration ended abruptly when Joseph Stalin reclassified the Kurds as a “second-tier” nationality. By direct order, the Kurdish population was subjected to mass dispersal across the Soviet republics, including Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia, fragmenting the community and weakening its political cohesion.

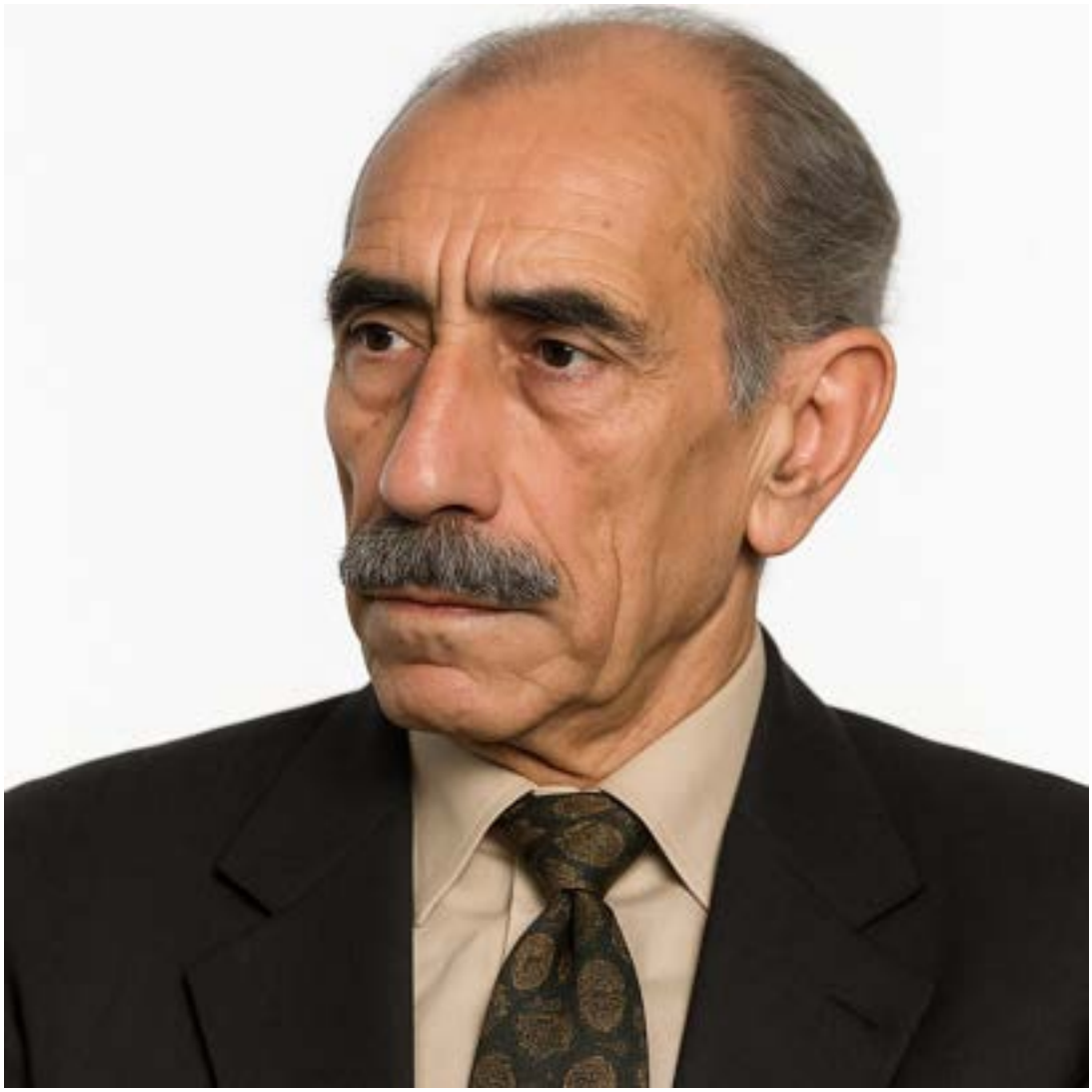
The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s triggered a wave of independence movements among its constituent nationalities. During this period, the Yezidi Kurds of Red Kurdistan, led by Wekil Mustafa, formed the **Kurdish People’s Army** and proclaimed the independence of Red Kurdistan, designating the city of Lachin as its capital.

In 1992, the simmering territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Red Kurdistan escalated into open conflict. Both sides sought to court Kurdish allegiance. The Armenian government approached Wekil Mustafa with an offer: in exchange for Kurdish military cooperation against Azerbaijan, Armenia would recognize and guarantee autonomy for Red Kurdistan should the war end in their favor. Conversely, Azerbaijan appealed to religious solidarity, attempting to mobilize Muslim Kurds by promising recognition of Kurdish rights and inclusion within an Islamic political framework.

As the rival powers competed for dominance, the region was engulfed in a devastating three-year war. Thousands of Kurds were killed, while tens of thousands more were

forcibly displaced, abandoning their homes and livelihoods in Red Kurdistan. By 1995, Armenia and Azerbaijan reached a political settlement to divide the territory between them. This agreement marked the end of the Kurdish bid for self-rule in the region.

The aftermath was one of disillusionment and exile. Most of the Kurdish revolutionary fighters were expelled from Red Kurdistan, and many became political refugees scattered across the Caucasus, Russia, and Europe. The **Red Uprising**—a fleeting moment of Kurdish political assertion in the post-Soviet era—was brutally suppressed, leaving Red Kurdistan once again under foreign occupation and its people without the autonomy they had briefly sought to reclaim.



Wekîl Mistefayêv Wekil Mustafa (1938–2019)

Born in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and later emigrated to Brussels, Belgium.

4.27 – The Uprising of the People of Rojava (Western Kurdistan), 2011–2025

Prior to **2011**, and indeed throughout much of modern history, the **Ba‘ath regime in Syria** denied the **Kurds of Rojava** any recognition of their **national identity**, treating them as **stateless foreigners** in their own homeland. They were systematically deprived of **citizenship, property rights, political participation**, and even the legal right to speak their language or celebrate their culture.

When the **Syrian uprising** began in **2011**, the Kurds of Rojava seized the opportunity for liberation. Through **unity, grassroots organization, and strategic coordination**, they rapidly **liberated all major cities of Western Kurdistan**, including **Qamishlo, Serekaniye, Afrin, Hasakah, Kobani, and Manbij**.

Formation of Political and Military Structures

In the early phase of the revolution, the people of Rojava established the **Democratic Union Party (PYD)** and two key military forces:

- **YPG (People’s Protection Units)**
- **YPJ (Women’s Protection Units)**

These forces were tasked with defending Kurdish-inhabited areas, upholding public security, and promoting a **pluralistic and gender-equal political vision**.

ISIS, Turkish Policy, and Crimes Against Humanity (2014–2015)

From **2014–2015**, the **Turkish government** openly supported **Sunni Islamist extremist groups**, particularly **ISIS**, to destabilize Kurdish-controlled areas. ISIS launched **coordinated assaults** on both **Southern and Western Kurdistan**, committing atrocities that shocked the world:

- **Thousands of Kurds were massacred**.
- **Thousands of women and children** were abducted, enslaved, and sold in **markets across Arab cities**.
- Survivors endured **systematic sexual violence**, forced conversions, and indefinite separation from their families.
- As of today, **over 3,000 Kurdish women remain captive**, many in the homes of **Arab and Turkish men**, subjected to ongoing abuse.

These crimes **echoed a historical pattern** dating back **1,400 years**, when **Quraysh and Umayyad Arab armies** invaded Kurdish territories such as **Tisfun (Baghdad), Kharaiba (Basra), Nasiriyah, Raqqa, Aleppo, Mosul, and Khuzestan**, enslaving Kurdish women under **religious pretexts** that sanctioned their exploitation.

The Battle of Kobani and the Rise of "Women, Life, Freedom"

In **2014–2015**, ISIS launched a massive offensive against **Kobani**. After **three months of intense urban combat**, Kurdish defenders—backed by **international coalition air support**—successfully repelled ISIS.

This **historic victory**:

- Became a **global symbol of Kurdish resilience**.
- Embodied the revolutionary philosophy of **"Women, Life, Freedom"**.
- Marked the **turning point** in the war against ISIS, preventing further advances into Rojava.

Following Kobani's liberation, Kurdish forces gradually **cleared all towns and villages of Western Kurdistan from ISIS control**.

Autonomous Administration and Governance

Under the leadership of **Mazloum Kobani**, the Kurds of Rojava established an **Autonomous Administration** with a focus on:

- **Democratic self-governance**
- **Gender equality**
- **Multi-ethnic inclusion**
- **Community-based justice**

This model of governance became internationally noted for its **discipline, inclusivity, and stability** despite ongoing threats from **ISIS, the Syrian regime, and Turkey**.

Turkish Invasions and Ethnic Cleansing (2018–2019)

In **2018**, the **Turkish military**, alongside **extremist Islamist militias** (including many former ISIS members), **invaded Afrin**.
In **2019**, they captured **Serekaniye** and **Tel Abyad**.

Consequences:

- **Over 400,000 Kurds were forcibly displaced**.
- The occupied regions were placed under **Turkish gendarmerie control**.
- International human rights bodies identified these operations as **acts of ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering**.
- Despite global awareness, **no decisive international action** was taken to halt Turkey's aggression.

Legacy and Continuing Struggle

Over the past **14 years**, the **Rojava Revolution** has become a **living example of grassroots democracy, gender liberation, and social justice** in the Middle East.

Its **legitimacy** derives not from the **Syrian state** or foreign intervention, but from the **will, sacrifice, and organization of the Kurdish people** themselves.
To this day, the **strength of Rojava** lies in its **unwavering commitment to self-determination**—despite ongoing wars, sieges, and diplomatic isolation.

General Mazloum Kobani

4.28 – The Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs of Kurdistan

The **Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs** share a **common ancient Mesopotamian heritage**, yet they differ in **historical development, religious identity, and linguistic evolution**. All three trace their roots to the **ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia**, particularly to the lands between the **Tigris and Euphrates Rivers**, where the **Assyrian Empire** flourished between **c. 2500 and 612 BC**.

According to historical records, the **ancestors** of these peoples **migrated to Mesopotamia** from the regions surrounding **Greater Syria (Damascus)** and **Jordan**.

Linguistic and Cultural Identity

- The term **Syriac** typically refers to **Aramaic-speaking Christian communities**, especially those associated with the **Syriac Orthodox Church**.
- Some Syriacs **self-identify as Assyrian**, while others see themselves as distinct. They speak **Turoyo**, a dialect rooted in **Classical Aramaic**.
- Both the **Assyrians** and **Chaldeans** speak **Sūrāth**, another Aramaic dialect.

Linguistic Classification:

- **Assyrian/Syriac/Chaldean modern languages** belong to the **Aramaic branch** of the **Semitic language family**, which also includes **Hebrew** and **Arabic**.
- The **ancient Assyrian language—Akkadian**—was an **Eastern Semitic** tongue, linguistically closer to Hebrew. Over centuries, **Aramaic replaced Akkadian** as the dominant written and spoken language of the region.

Prominent Assyrian Imperial Dynasties

- **Shamshi-Adad I** (r. c. 1813–1781 BC) – Founder of one of the earliest Assyrian city-states.
- **Tukulti-Ninurta I** (r. c. 1243–1207 BC) – Expanded Assyrian control over **Babylon** and its surrounding territories.
- **Neo-Assyrian Empire** (911–612 BC) – Reached its zenith under rulers such as:
    - **Ashurnasirpal II**
    - **Tiglath-Pileser III**
    - **Sargon II**
    - **Sennacherib**
    - **Esarhaddon**
    - **Ashurbanipal**

      At its height, the Neo-Assyrian Empire controlled **Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Levant, and parts of Anatolia**.

Collapse:

In **612 BC**, a coalition of **Babylonians and Medes** conquered **Nineveh**, ending Assyrian imperial rule. Thereafter, the Assyrians came under the dominion of successive empires, including the **Babylonians, Achaemenid Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Ottomans**.

Survival and Decline

Although their political sovereignty ended over **2,600 years ago**, the **Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs** preserved their **religious traditions, cultural heritage, and linguistic identity**. However, **centuries of conquest, forced assimilation, and mass displacement** gradually reduced their numbers and influence.

Geographic Distribution

Today, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs reside in:

- **Southern Kurdistan:** Nineveh, Hawler (Erbil)
- **Western Kurdistan:** Hasakah, Aleppo
- **Northern Kurdistan:** Mardin, Midyat
- **Eastern Kurdistan:** Wirme (Urmia)
- **Iraq:** Baghdad
- **Syria:** Damascus
- **Turkey:** Istanbul
- **Iran:** Tehran

Large diaspora communities exist in the **United States, Sweden, Germany, and Australia**.

Demographics

As of **2025**, the **global Assyrian–Chaldean–Syriac population** is estimated at **approximately 4 million**, with **the majority now living in diaspora** due to prolonged wars, religious persecution, and political instability in their ancestral homelands. *(See Appendix 4.)*

Section Five

5- The Kurdish Language

The **Kurdish language** is spoken by the Kurdish people across a vast geographical area, encompassing four principal dialect groups:

1. **Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji)** – Frequently misrepresented in popular discourse, sub-regional names such as **Shikaki** (a Kurdish tribal name in Eastern Kurdistan) or **Badini** (a reference to a specific region in Southern Kurdistan) are often incorrectly described as separate dialects.
2. **Central Kurdish (Sorani)** – Local names such as **Mokriani**, **Sileimani**, and **Adelani** are not independent dialects but rather designations of regions or tribal areas within the Sorani-speaking zone.
3. **Southern Kurdish (Ilami)** – Varieties labelled **Kermashani**, **Luri**, **Kalhuri**, **Lakki**, and **Bakhtiari** are not separate dialects; they represent regional or tribal identities within the Ilami branch.
4. **Gorani** – Forms such as **Hawrami**, **Zazaki**, and **Dimilki** are often treated as dialects, but these names originally denote specific regions or tribal groups in Kurdistan.

Dialect Distribution and Demographics

Kurdish Dialect	**Estimated % of Kurdish Speakers**	**Regions of Use**
Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji)	45%	Northern Kurdistan, Rojava (Western Kurdistan), Red Kurdistan, Badinan, Mosul and Shingal (Southern Kurdistan), Wirme (Urmia), Salmas, Khoy (Eastern Kurdistan)

Kurdish Dialect	Estimated % of Kurdish Speakers	Regions of Use
Central Kurdish (Sorani)	30%	Central Eastern and Central Southern Kurdistan
Southern Kurdish (Ilami)	20%	Provinces of Kermashan, Ilam, and Luristan (Eastern Kurdistan); Khanaqin (Southern Kurdistan)
Gorani (Zazaki, Dimilki)	3%	Primarily in Dersim; also in Bingöl, Kharpet (Elaziz), Erzincan, Diyarbakir, Malatya, Sivas, Adiyaman, Mush
Gorani (Hawrami)	2%	Hawraman region of Southern and Eastern Kurdistan (Paveh, Tawila, Nowsud, Sarvabad, Halabja, Biyare)

5.1 – The Origins of the Kurdish Language

Throughout history, **few Kurds have deeply examined the origins, historical development, or socio-political shaping of their language**. This neglect has allowed **external powers to define Kurdish identity and linguistic heritage through biased frameworks**, often to the detriment of Kurdish national consciousness.

In the **early phase of Western linguistics**, Kurdish was broadly classified within the **Indo-European language family**. However, under **ideological pressure from Persian, Turkish, and Arab nationalist agendas**, it was subsequently reclassified as a **sub-branch of Iranian languages**—a move that has shaped academic discourse to this day. *(See Appendix 5.)*

Politically Motivated Misclassification

The **first major misclassification** occurred in **1834**, when **Franz Bopp**, invited to the Qajar court, wrongly labelled **Kurdish** and **Balochi** as dialects of Persian. This error was **repeated by later German linguists**, such as **Max Müller (1861)** and **Theodor Benfey (1869)**, without direct study of the Kurdish language.

British linguists in the 19th century—such as **William Johnston**—adopted the same framework without **visiting Kurdistan, learning Kurdish, or conducting structural comparisons**. Instead, they relied on **Persian nationalist sources and Qajar elites of Turkic–Mongol origin**, who **portrayed Kurdish as a Persian offshoot** for political reasons.

As a result, the classification of Kurdish as an **"Iranian language"** persists in **international academia**, despite **linguistic, grammatical, and syntactic evidence to the contrary**.

Linguistic Distinction from Persian

- **Mutual intelligibility** between Kurdish and Persian is minimal; a Persian speaker without prior study of Kurdish would struggle to comprehend even basic phrases.
- **Grammatical structure, phonology, and syntax** differ significantly.
- The Kurdish language's **core lineage** is rooted in **Medo–Zagros–Hurrian** foundations, not in Persian linguistic ancestry.

This **misclassification** is **not a mere academic oversight**, but a **deliberate distortion serving political assimilation**. Persian nationalist scholars avoid acknowledging their **Central Asian (Tajik) origins** and instead promote a **false indigenous narrative** that subsumes Kurdish into the Persian sphere, diminishing its historical and cultural status. (*See Appendix 6*.)

Artificial Fragmentation of Dialects

The **division of Kurdish into numerous "dialects"** is largely the work of **political agendas**, not linguistic science.

- Many so-called dialects—**Shikaki, Herki, Hakkari, Amadi, Qamishli, Badini**—are **regional or tribal names** under the umbrella of **Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji)**.
- Similarly, **Hewleri, Mokriani, Suleymani, Sineyi, Belbasi** are **Sorani sub-varieties**, not separate dialects.
- In **Southern Kurdish (Ilami)**, labels such as **Laki, Takistani, Tati-Jow, Bakhtiari, Khomzari, Northern Luri, Kalhuri, Kermashani** are **sub-branches**, not distinct dialects.

If one includes **assimilated Kurdish populations**—those who no longer speak Kurdish but historically did—**Southern Kurdish (Ilami)** emerges as the **largest branch**, contradicting the common assumption that **Kurmanji** holds that position.

The **Gorani** branch has likewise been **fragmented into six named varieties**—Bajelani, Gorani, Kakayi, Shabaki, Northern Zazaki, Southern Zazaki—so excessively differentiated that **their Kurdish identity is often erased** in formal classification.

Authentic Linguistic Framework

The Kurdish language is **one language with a unified foundation**, exhibiting **minor regional variation** rather than large-scale dialectal separation. Most "dialects" are in reality **geographical labels** or **tribal identifiers**, not linguistically autonomous systems.

Correct Classification Table:

Category	Description
Linguistic Origin	Medo–Zagros–Hurrian language
Language Name	Kurdish
Primary Dialect Groups	Northern, Central, Southern, Gorani

Formal Dialects and Representative Cities

Formal Dialect	Variants / Regional Names
Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Badini, Hakkari, Mardin, Qamishli, Amadiya, Shikaki, Sivas
Central Kurdish (Sorani)	Sulaymaniyah, Hawler (Erbil) (Hewleri), Mukriyan, Baban (Belbasi), Ardalan
Southern Kurdish (Ilami)	Kermashani, Ilami, Luri, Kalhuri, Bakhtiari, Faili, Tati
Gorani Kurdish	Hawrami, Zazaki, Dimilki

5.2 – Evaluation of the Avestan Language and Its Use in Its Historical Era

The **Avestan language** is composed of **53 letters**, of which **14 are vowels** and **39 are consonants**.

Old Avestan (also known as *Gathic Avestan*) was spoken during the time of **Zoroaster**, in **eastern Iran** or the broader region of **West Asia**, approximately between **1500 BC** and **1000 BC**.

Younger Avestan, found in later Zoroastrian scriptures, was in use from about **1000 BC** to **500 BC**. Although it eventually ceased to be a spoken vernacular, Avestan continued

to be employed in **religious rituals**, and it remains in liturgical use today among **Zoroastrian communities**.

During the **Sasanian Empire** (224–651 AD), the Avestan alphabet was both **preserved** and **further developed**. In the reign of **Shapur II** (309–379 AD), substantial efforts were made to **transcribe Zoroastrian religious texts** into the Avestan script. The alphabet remained in use from approximately **350 AD** to **1000 AD**, well into the **early Islamic period**, especially in Zoroastrian schools and communities.

After **1000 AD**, under Islamic rule, the **public use** of Avestan was prohibited, and **Arabic** became the dominant language. Nevertheless, the script survived in **religious instruction**, particularly among the **Parsis** in India and a few remaining Zoroastrian communities in Iran.

The **Avestan script** is unique to the Zoroastrian tradition. It is written **left-to-right** and is **highly phonetic**. While there are some **lexical parallels** between Avestan and **Sanskrit**, the script itself bears **no relation** to **Devanagari** (the writing system used for Sanskrit).

Avestan Alphabet – Phonetic Comparison Table

Vowels (16): a, ā, ə, ē, e, ē, o, ō, i, ī, u, ū, əi, əu, ao, āo
Consonants (37): k, x, g, ɣ, c, j, t, d, δ, ṭ, ṯh, p, b, f, β, m, n, ŋ, y, v, r, l, s, z, š, ž, h, ʿ, θ, ź, ṣ, ṛ, ṝ, ṇ, ḷ, ḹ

Avestan Letter	IPA	English Equivalent	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Kurdish (Sorani)
𐬀 (a)	/a/	*a* in father	a	ا
𐬁 (ā)	/aː/	long *a*	a (دریژ)	ئا

Avestan Letter	IPA	English Equivalent	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Kurdish (Sorani)
𐬀 (ə)	/ə/	*a* in sofa	e (بێ پەستایی)	ە
𐬁 (ā)	/əː/	long schwa	–	–
𐬂 (e)	/e/	*e* in bed	e	ە
𐬃 (ē)	/eː/	long *e*	ê	ێ
𐬄 (o)	/o/	*o* in hot	o	و
𐬅 (ō)	/oː/	long *o*	o (درێژ)	وو
𐬆 (i)	/i/	*i* in machine	i	ی
𐬇 (ī)	/iː/	long *ee*	î	یی
𐬈 (u)	/u/	*u* in put	u	و
𐬉 (ū)	/uː/	long *oo*	û	وو
𐬊 (əi)	/əi/	*ei* in weigh	ê / ey	ێ
𐬋 (əu)	/əu/	*ow* in cow	ew	ێو / ئۆ

Avestan Letter	IPA	English Equivalent	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Kurdish (Sorani)
𐬀 (ao)	/ao/	*ow* in how	aw	ئاو / ئاۆ
𐬁 (āo)	/aːo/	long *ow*	aw (درێژ)	ئاۆ
𐬐 (ka)	/k/	*k* in kite	k	ک
𐬛 (xa)	/x/	German *ch* in Bach	x	خ
𐬜 (ga)	/g/	*g* in go	g	گ
𐬞 (γ)	/ɣ/	French guttural *r*	gh	غ
𐬌 (ca)	/t͡ʃ/	*ch* in church	ç	چ
𐬡 (ja)	/d͡ʒ/	*j* in jam	j	ج
𐬠 (ṭ)	/ʈ/	retroflex *t*	ṭ (not in Kurdish)	ط (لە کوردیدا نییە)
𐬢 (δ)	/ð/	*th* in this	dh (not in Kurdish)	ذ (لە کوردیدا نییە)
𐬉 (t)	/t/	*t* in top	t	ت
𐬈 (d)	/d/	*d* in dog	d	د

Avestan Letter	IPA	English Equivalent	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Kurdish (Sorani)
𐬯 (p)	/p/	*p* in pen	p	پ
𐬨 (b)	/b/	*b* in boy	b	ب
𐬬 (f)	/f/	*f* in fun	f	ف
𐬝 (β)	/β/	soft *v* / *w*	v / w	و (ناوەڕۆکی)
𐬙 (ŋ)	/ŋ/	*ng* in sing	ng	نگ
𐬦 (n)	/n/	*n* in net	n	ن
𐬩 (m)	/m/	*m* in man	m	م
𐬌 (y)	/j/	*y* in yes	y	ی
𐬭 (v)	/v/	*v* in vet	v / w	ڤ / و
𐬭 (r)	/r/	rolled *r*	r	ر
𐬭 (l)	/l/	*l* in lip	l	ل
𐬱 (s)	/s/	*s* in sit	s	س

Avestan Letter	IPA	English Equivalent	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Kurdish (Sorani)
𐬰 (z)	/z/	*z* in zoo	z	ز
𐬱 (š)	/ʃ/	*sh* in ship	ş	ش
𐬲 (ž)	/ʒ/	*s* in measure	j	ژ
𐬴 (h)	/h/	*h* in hat	h	ه
𐬀 (ʾ)	/ʔ/	glottal stop	’	ع
𐬎 (ṯ)	/θ/	*th* in think	th (not in Kurdish)	ث (له کوردیدا نییه)
𐬵 (ź)	/ʒ̟/	dental *z*	–	–

It is important to note that the **Sasanian Empire**—whose rulers were of **Kurdish origin**—employed **Southern Kurdish (Elamite)** as the **official administrative language** of the monarchy, while the **Avestan script** was reserved exclusively for **liturgical purposes** within the Zoroastrian tradition. **Avestan** thus served as a sacred, ceremonial language rather than a vernacular medium of daily governance.

Following the **collapse of the Arab Caliphate’s control over Iran**, the **Samanid dynasty** undertook the creation of what became known as the **Persian language**, which they fashioned from a combination of **Southern Kurdish (Elamite)** grammatical structure and extensive **Arabic vocabulary**. By this time, the Persians had neither preserved nor desired to revive the original pre-Islamic Persian, and they rejected the continued use of **Arabic** or **pure Kurdish**. Instead, they encoded **Kurdish grammar** with **Arabic-scripted lexicon**, producing a new hybrid tongue that they termed **“New Persian.”**

5.3 – Linguistic Assessment of the Peoples of the Zagros, Mesopotamia, and Surrounding Regions

Historical sources clearly demonstrate that the Kurdish people descend from the **Medes, Lullubi, and Hurrians**, founders of the Median Empire in 678 BC. This lineage is entirely distinct from that of all other regional and global populations. In other words, the Kurds are **neither Indian, Persian, Arab, Turk, nor European**. The Medes themselves spoke **Kurdish**, a language unrelated to any other in the world.

While Kurdish and Persian share a limited number of similar words, this does not indicate a shared origin. The occasional overlap—such as *du* ("two") or *aw* ("water")—is insufficient evidence of common ancestry when the **structure, grammar, and syntax** differ so profoundly. (See Appendix 7.)

To understand these differences more clearly, we can compare a simple phrase across several languages and dialects:

Table 1 – Phrase Comparison: "I am human like other human beings"

Language / Dialect	Translation	Latin Transliteration
Kurdish (Northern / Kurmanji)	منیش وەک مرۆڤانی تر مرۆڤم	Minîş wek merovanî tir merovem
Kurdish (Central / Sorani)	Ez jî wekî wan mirovan mirov im	Ez jî wekî wan mirovan mirov im
Kurdish (Southern / Ilami)	منیم وەک دیار مردمی دیەم	Minim wek dyar mardomî dyem
Persian (Farsi)	من انسان هستم مانند سایر انسان‌ها	Man ensân hastam mânand-e sâyer ensân-hâ
Dari Persian	من انسان هستم مانند سایر انسان‌ها	Man ensân hastam mânand-e sâyer ensân-hâ

Language / Dialect	Translation	Latin Transliteration
Tajik Persian (Cyrillic)	Ман инсон ҳастам мисли дигар инсонҳо	Man inson hastam misli digar insonho
Azeri Turkish (Latin)	Mən də digər insanlar kimi insanam	Mən də digər insanlar kimi insanam
Turkish (Istanbul)	Ben de diğer insanlar gibi insanım	Ben de diğer insanlar gibi insanım
Arabic	أنا إنسان مثل باقي البشر	Ana insan mithl bâqī al-bashar
Hindi	मैं भी अन्य इंसानों की तरह इंसान हूँ।	Main bhī anyā insānoṅ kī tarah insān hūṅ
English	I am human like other human beings	I am human like other human beings

---

Evidence from Table 1

No word, orthographic pattern, or grammatical structure in this table justifies classifying **Kurdish** as a branch of Persian, Hindi, or European languages. The syntax of Kurdish—particularly **Kurmanji**, the most authentic form—is fundamentally different. This strongly challenges the Indo-European classification.

Given the Median state's historical sovereignty and the distinct Tajik migration from Central Asia around 1000 BC, it is more accurate to categorize Kurdish under a **"Medo–Zagros–Hurrian"** family rather than Indo-Iranian. Kurds are indigenous to the Zagros and Mesopotamian region, unlike Persians, who are later migrants.

It is important to note that **modern Persian ("New Persian")** is fundamentally different from **Middle Persian (Pahlavi)**. When the **Samanid Empire** took power from the Abbasid Caliphate, Persian as a functioning language had largely disappeared. The Samanids **constructed a new language** by using the **grammar of Southern Kurdish**

(Ilami), adding large amounts of Arabic vocabulary, and adopting the Arabic script. This "New Persian" is structurally weak without Arabic loanwords and retains fragments of Kurdish grammar.

Observation:
Any Kurd who speaks any Kurdish dialect can understand at least 50% of what is said in other Kurdish dialects. This confirms that these dialects all belong to one language. Similarly, Dari Persian, Iranian Persian, and Tajik Persian are dialects of the same language — though structurally different from Kurdish.

Table 2 – Historical Evolution of "I am human" in Kurdish and Persian

Language & Era	**Sentence**	**Latin Transliteration**
Kurdish – 2025 AD	من مرۆڤم	Ez mirovim
Modern Persian – 2025 AD	من انسانم	Man ensanam
Samanid Persian – ca. 1000 AD	من مردم	Man mardom
Sasanian Persian – ca. 300–900 AD	ئەز مەردۆم	Az mard-om
Achaemenid Old Persian – ca. 600–400 BC	𐎠𐎭 𐎱𐎼𐎹𐎢𐎹𐏁 (*Adam martiya*)	Adam martiya
Avestan – ca. 1000 BC	𐬀𐬵𐬎𐬀𐬨𐬌𐬀𐬴 𐬨𐬀𐬱𐬌𐬀 (*Azəm mašiiå*)	Azəm mašiiå

In the and Avestan examples, there is **no resemblance** to Kurdish. In modern Persian, "man" is borrowed from Kurdish, while "mardom" comes from Kurdish *mɛrdom*. This

indicates a process of **phonetic adaptation** by Persians to reshape borrowed Kurdish words into their own phonology.

Table 3 – Ethical Concept Evolution: Avestan to Modern Kurdish and Persian

Language & Era	Original Sentence + Latin Transliteration
Avestan – ca. 700 BC	𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬀 𐬀𐬌𐬌𐬀𐬌𐬌 𐬌𐬌𐬌𐬀𐬌𐬌𐬉 𐬀𐬌𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬀 𐬀𐬌𐬀𐬌𐬌 (Ahuna Vairya, Ashem Vohu, Vohu Manah, Asha, Spenta Armaiti)
Kurdish – 21st Century	یەکسانی خوازی، بیری باشە، بیری باش، وشەی پیرۆز کرداری پیرۆزە (Yeksanî xwazî, bîrî başe, bîrî baş, wişey pîroz, kirdarî pîroz)
Persian – 21st Century	عادل بودن، فکر خوب است، فکر خوب، کلام مقدس است، کلام مقدس عمل مقدس است (‘Ādel būdan, fekr-e khub ast, kalām-e moghadas ast, kalām-e moghadas ‘amal-e moghadas ast)

From this comparison, it is evident that **no single word** is shared among Avestan, Kurdish, and Persian. The claim that Persian descends from Avestan is therefore unfounded. Avestan was a **liturgical language**, while Kurdish was the **spoken language** of the Median Empire.

Language	Sentence	Latin Transliteration	English Translation
Persian (Arabic-based)	عادل بودن، فکر خوب است، فکر خوب، کلام مقدس است، کلام مقدس عمل مقدس است.	‘Ādel būdan, fekr-e khub ast, fekr-e khub, kalām-e moghadas ast, kalām-e moghadas ‘amal-e moghadas ast.	To be just, thought is good, good thought, sacred word, sacred word is sacred action.

Language	Sentence	Latin Transliteration	English Translation
Kurdish (Native vocabulary)	بوودن (بوون)، خوب است (خاسەست)، است (هەس، هەست)	Bûdan (bûn), xûb ast (xasest), ast (hes/hest)	To be (bûn), is good (xasest), is (hes/hest)

Critical Linguistic Note:

In the above Persian example, the highlighted words in **blue** are of **Arabic origin**, while the highlighted words in **green** are of **Kurdish origin**. There is **no original Persian vocabulary** present. This raises a fundamental question: *How can such a language be classified as "Persian" when it contains neither words nor structure from the original Persian language?*

Historically, **no one today can speak the original Persian language**, as it became a **dead language** during the Abbasid Caliphate. From **750–945 AD**, the Abbasids enforced a strict Arabisation policy in Iran, forbidding the public use of Persian for over **200 years**. By the time the Samanids attempted to "revive" Persian in the 10th century, the language had already vanished from public life. The so-called "revival" was in fact the creation of a **new hybrid language**, built from:

- **Grammar:** Kurdish (Ilami)
- **Vocabulary:** Predominantly Kurdish and Arabic
- **Script:** Arabic script, as the original Pahlavi script was forgotten

This **"New Persian"** bears no direct linguistic continuity with Persian and cannot be accurately described as a descendant of Avestan or Middle Persian. It is, in essence, **Kurdish grammatical structure filled with Arabic vocabulary**, codified in Arabic script — a product of post-Abbasid synthesis, not of ancient Persian heritage.

Use of "V" and "Zh" in Kurdish vs. Persian

Kurdish frequently employs the letters **ڤ (V)** and **ژ (Zh)**, which are rare in Persian. This

reinforces Kurdish's independence from Persian. In fact, if all Kurdish-origin words were removed from Persian, Persian would largely collapse as a functional language. Kurdish, however, remains **self-sufficient** and fully expressive without borrowing.

Linguistic Structure

Kurdish is **agglutinative**, combining roots and affixes to create complex meanings—unlike Indo-European languages, which rely more heavily on word order. The fragmentation of Kurdish dialects—Kurmanji, Sorani, Southern Kurdish, and Gorani—over the past 1,400 years is a result of **political division and foreign occupation**, not inherent linguistic separation. Despite this, mutual intelligibility remains high: a speaker of one dialect can generally understand 50% or more of another.

5.4 – Historical Phases of the Kurdish Language

The **Kurdish language** possesses a documented history extending back at least **five millennia**, with roots traceable to the **Lullubi** people, who inhabited the region between the **Tigris** and **Euphrates** rivers around **3000 BC**. By approximately **2000 BC**, the **Hurrians** were also using what is essentially an early form of Kurdish across much of this territory. Around **1000 BC**, the **Gutians** of the Zagros Mountains spoke the same linguistic stock, maintaining its continuity across centuries.

The **institutionalisation** of the Kurdish language occurred around **700 BC** in the land of the **Medes**. From that point forward, the Medes preserved and developed this language, and many **Kurdish words** are recorded in ancient **Median texts** from the **6th century BC**.

From **300 AD to 1300 AD**, **Central Kurdish** experienced a pronounced influence from the **Gorani dialect**, which served as a major literary and cultural medium. Zoroastrian and early Islamic texts refer to Kurdish tribal regions, and religious scriptures of the 10th century were frequently composed in Gorani. The **Sasanian era (224–651 AD)** also

provides references to Kurdish-speaking communities. However, due to the political decline of Kurdish states, much of the written record from the **Median** and **Sasanian** periods has been lost.

Although the **Avesta** (Zoroastrian sacred text) does not explicitly mention the Kurds, it refers to **Media**—long recognised as the **ancestral homeland** of the Kurdish people. For instance, the **Vendidad (1.9)** states:

"The sixteenth and best land created by Ahura Mazda was Ragha"
(modern-day **Rey**, south of Tehran).

This indicates that much of present-day **Iran**—including **Tehran**, **Baluchistan**, and **Mazandaran**—was historically Kurdish territory.

Kurdish Ancestry in Biblical and Religious Texts

Multiple passages in the **Bible** confirm the identity of the Medes and their distinction from the Persians:

- **Isaiah 13:17**:
  "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it."
  This refers to the Medes inhabiting the highlands of **Kurdistan**.
- **Daniel 5:28**:
  "Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."
  Here, the Medes and Persians are listed separately, confirming that the **Kurds (Medes)** are distinct from the **Persian-Tajiks** and **Aryans**.
- **Acts 2:9** (New Testament):
  "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia..."
  Three of these—Parthians, Medes, and Elamites—are acknowledged ancestors of the Kurds.

Even at **Pentecost**, the presence of the Medes is recorded, underscoring the scholarly consensus that the **Medes were the direct forebears of the Kurds**.

In the **Torah** (Genesis 10:2, "Table of Nations"):

"The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras."
Here, **"Madai"** refers to the Medes, ethnically linked to the Kurds.

Similarly, **Jeremiah 51:11** states:

"The Lord has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, for His plan is against Babylon to destroy it."
This again affirms the Medes as a distinct and powerful people.

Development of Kurdish Literature

Classical Kurdish literature began to emerge around **1300 AD** and became **fully formalised by 1650 AD**, evolving into a refined literary language. Notable contributors include **Melayê Cizîrî (1570–1640 AD)** and **Ehmedê Xanî (1650–1707 AD)**, who composed their works in the **Aramaic script**. Xanî's renowned epic **Mem û Zîn** (1695 AD) stands as a milestone of Kurdish literature.

By the **19th century**, **Kurmanji Kurdish** was adapted into **Latin script**, and in **1898**, **Jaladet Bedirxan** published the first Kurdish newspaper.

From the **20th century onwards**, the Kurdish language underwent **full grammatical and lexical standardisation**, reinforcing its status as one of the **world's historically continuous and culturally rich languages**.

5.5 – The Tat Dialect of Kurdish

The **Tat dialect** constitutes a branch of the Kurdish language that has been subject to significant assimilation under the influence of Persian and Azeri Turkish. As a result, it is now considered **endangered** and is increasingly absent from daily use.

Historical sources and oral traditions indicate that prior to the arrival of Persian and Turkic populations, the inhabitants of **Zangiyan (Zanjan)**, **Qezwan (Qazvin), Rebar (Rasht) ,** and **Ramswar (Ramsar)** all spoke a Tat variety of Kurdish. Consequently, a considerable portion of the present-day Persian- and Azeri-speaking populations of **Zangiyan (Zanjan), Qezwan (Qazvin), Rebar (Rasht) , Ramswar (Ramsar), Tehran, Rojhalat (Markazi), Khorasan, and Turkmenistan** are ethnically **Tat Kurds** whose language has undergone heavy lexical and phonological modification. While their speech today is Persianized or Azerified, their ethnic origin remains Kurdish.

Despite this assimilation, Tat Kurdish still survives in certain regions of **northwestern Iran** and the **Caucasus**. Communities where the Tat dialect remains in use include:

- **Qezwan (Qazvin) Province** (Takestan, Ashtehard, Abyek, and surrounding villages) – historically known as *Tatstan* before being renamed during Turkic rule.
- **Southern and southeastern Zangiyan (Zanjan)**
- **Villages near Khalkhal in Ardewel (Ardabil) Province**
- **Karaj in Alborz Province**
- **Rojhalat (Markazi) and Taran (Tehran) Provinces**

In the **Dagestan** region of Russia, segments of the *Mountain Jewish* (Juhuro) community continue to speak a Judeo-Tat variant, which is a derivative of the original Tat Kurdish dialect.

Linguistic Position

Tat belongs to the **Southern Kurdish (Ilami)** subgroup. While it retains core Kurdish grammatical structures, centuries of Persian and Azeri influence—combined with the absence of formal education in Tat—have caused substantial lexical replacement,

especially in modern and technical vocabulary. This erosion has accelerated because younger generations increasingly adopt Persian or Azeri as their primary language for socio-economic mobility, leaving Tat Kurdish at risk of extinction.

Authorities in both Iran and Azerbaijan have historically contributed to this linguistic decline by classifying the Tat dialect as *Old Azeri*, a political label intended to obscure its Kurdish origins.

The table below illustrates the classification of the phrase "**the country is beautiful**" across different languages and dialects, showing the Tat form within its Southern Kurdish context:

Language & Era	**Sentence**	**Latin Transliteration**
Old Azeri	واتان شازای وابەدیه	Vatan šāzāyī va bādīh
Modern Baku Azeri (21st Century)	وەتەن گوزەلدیر	Vətən gözəldir
Iranian Azeri	وەتەن گوزەلدی	Vətən gözəl di
Kurdish (Northern – Kurmanji)	وڵات خۆشکه	Wilat xoşike
Kurdish (Central – Sorani)	وڵات جوانه	Welat jwana
Kurdish (Southern – Ilami)	وەتەن خۆشه	Wetan xoşe
Kurdish (Tat-influenced Southern)	وەتەن خۆشکه	Watan xoşike
Persian (Farsi)	کشور زیباست	Keshvar zibâst
English	The country is beautiful	—

Lexical Observations

The Kurdish lexeme **wetan** (homeland) is deeply rooted in the Kurdish linguistic tradition. Although it resembles the Arabic term *al-waṭan*, historical linguistics suggests that both could share a much older, possibly pre-Arabic, origin within the broader region. Kurdish also retains a purely native synonym, **welat**, which is widespread

across all dialects. Similarly, **xwêşk** (“beloved”) is an indigenous Kurdish word with long-standing poetic usage in Central Kurdish.

From a typological perspective, **Tat Kurdish** is firmly situated within the **Indo-European language family**, whereas **Azeri Turkish** belongs to the **Turkic Oghuz branch** (itself influenced by Mongolic). Consequently, it is linguistically inaccurate to define Tat as “Old Azeri.” Moreover, historical records indicate that prior to the first millennium BCE, neither Turkic nor Persian populations existed in these territories, reinforcing Tat’s deep Kurdish heritage.

Historical Context and Assimilation

During the **Shaddadid dynasty** (10th–12th centuries), cities such as **Baku, Ganja, Nakhchivan, Aras, Ardewel (Ardabil)** and the entirety of present-day northern Azerbaijan spoke either **Kurmanji** or **Tat Kurdish**. Following the **Seljuk invasions** (11th–12th centuries) and **Mongol conquests** (13th–14th centuries), Turkic languages were gradually imposed, displacing the indigenous Kurdish varieties.

By the early modern period (circa 1625 AD), cities such as **Tawrez (Tabriz), Miandoab, Tikab (Ganzak), Kurdawa (Azarshahr) (Tufargan), Ajabshir (Ardashir), and Maragheh** were predominantly **Mokri (Sorani) Kurdish-speaking**. Turkic-speaking populations were a small minority of refugees. However, sustained assimilation policies eventually erased Kurdish identity in these areas, leading present-day inhabitants to identify as Turks, despite their Kurdish ancestry.

In **Ecbatana (Hamadan) Province**, the population historically spoke a dialect closely related to Ilami Kurdish but has been linguistically assimilated into Persian (Tajik) speech. Similarly, in **Khuzestan, Bandar-e Mahshahr (Derband-e Mangshar), Bakhtiari districts, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Anshan (Shiraz), and Bushehr**, southern Kurdish dialects once dominated, but today Persian or Arabic predominates.

Comparative Overview of Kurdish Dialects

The following table compares the phrase **“I am human and happy to speak my mother tongue”** across major Kurdish dialects, illustrating their mutual intelligibility and shared linguistic framework:

Kurdish Dialect & Label	**Sentence**	**Latin Transliteration**
Kurmanji (Northern)	ئەز مرۆڤم و کەیف خۆشم ژ گوتنێ زمانێ دایکێ	Ez mirov im û kêfxweşim ji gotinê zimanê dayikê
Sorani (Central)	من مرۆڤم و خۆشحاڵم لە دوان بە زمانی دایکم.	Min merovem û xoşhalim le dwan be zamanî dayikam
Tati Kurdish	من مرۆڤم و خۆشحالم ژ گۆفتەن زمانێ مادەرەم	Min merovem û xoşhalem ji govten zimanê madarem
Laki (Southern)	من مرۆڤم و خۆشحاڵم کە بە زمانی دایکەم گەپمە کنەم	Min merovem û xoşhalem ke be zamanî dayikam gepme kenem
Luri (Southern – Lur)	من مرۆڤم و خۆشحاڵم کە بەزبان مادریم گپوگا میزەنم	Min merovem û xoşhalem ke bezabanî madarim gepuga mizanem
Bakhtiari Kurdish	من مرۆڤم و حالیکم کە بە زمانێ مادەری خودم گەفتەم	Min merovem û halîkem ke be zimanê madarî xodem gevtam
Feyli Kurdish	من مرۆڤم و خوشم هەد لە پەیڤینە زمانێ دایکەم	Min merovem û xoşam hed le peyvina zimanê dayikam
Zazaki (Dimli)	ئەز مرۆڤم و خوشم هەد لە پەیوە ڕو زیمانێ دایکەم	Ez miro im û xweş im ji peyvê xwende zımanê dayikam
Hawrami (Gorani)	من مرۆڤم و خوشم هەد لە گەوتنە زمانێ دایکەم	Min merovem û xoşam hed le gewtina zimanê dayikam

Linguistic and Historical Significance

Analysis of vocabulary, phonology, and grammar confirms that **Tat, along with Kurmanji, Sorani, Hawrami, Laki, Luri, Bakhtiari, Feyli, and Zazaki**, represents a unified Kurdish linguistic continuum. These dialects differ fundamentally from Persian, Arabic, and Turkish in both structure and lexicon.

Azeri Turkish, belonging to the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages, and Persian, shaped in its modern form during the Islamic era, share neither the deep historical presence nor the linguistic lineage of Kurdish in the region. **The Tat dialect is thus a legitimate and ancient branch of Kurdish, whose decline is the result of centuries of political assimilation rather than organic linguistic change.**

5.6 – The Origins of the Goran Kurds

The reign of **Sargon of Akkad** (2334–2279 BC) marked a pivotal era in the ancient Near East. As ruler of the **Akkadian Empire**, Sargon conquered the Sumerian cities of **Ur, Uruk, and Lagash**, consolidating Akkadian power over the southern Mesopotamian plain. Following the collapse of the Sumerian kingdom, a significant number of Sumerians were **forcibly relocated northward into Akkad**—corresponding largely to **modern-day Northern Kurdistan**—both to secure political control and to employ them as a buffer population against the Gutians of the Zagros.

In the **later Assyrian period**, particularly under rulers such as **Tiglath-Pileser III**, **Sennacherib**, and **Sargon II** (722–705 BC), large-scale **population transfers** were again employed as an instrument of imperial policy. Tens of thousands of Babylonians—many of whom were themselves descendants of Sumerians—were deported from southern Mesopotamia to the **Zagros Mountains**. Historical evidence suggests that **Dersim** (Northern Kurdistan) and **Hawraman** (Southern and Eastern Kurdistan) became notable settlement areas for these transplanted communities.

While many linguists—often influenced by prevailing academic orthodoxy or political considerations—classify **Sumerian** as an *extinct language*, the **persistent presence of numerous identical lexical items in both modern Kurdish and ancient Sumerian** suggests a deep historical link. This has led some scholars and Kurdish historians to propose that the **Goran and Zaza Kurds may be, at least in part, direct descendants of the Sumerians**.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the **grammatical structure** of Sumerian differs substantially from that of modern Kurdish, indicating significant linguistic evolution over the millennia. It is plausible that **5,000 years ago**, words were formed through **simple lexical compounding**, as is characteristic of many early religious and administrative languages. In such systems, grammar played a secondary role to meaning, with semantic clarity taking precedence over formal syntactic rules. The **Epic of Gilgamesh** provides invaluable insight into this world, revealing the administrative sophistication and societal organisation of Sumerian civilization.

From a cultural-historical perspective, **the Kurds may well represent one of the few surviving legacies of Sumerian civilization**. Yet the record of our shared past is fragmentary—much of it **plundered, buried, or erased** through successive waves of conquest by the **Akkadians, Assyrians, Persians, Arab Quraysh dynasties, and Mongolic Turks**.

The Sumerians themselves engaged in **frequent wars against neighbouring powers** such as the **Lullubi, Babylonians, and Elamites**, while also succumbing to **internal divisions and civil conflicts**. If there is a singular and unfortunate inheritance the Kurds have retained from the Sumerians, it is perhaps this tendency toward **internal discord**. As the Sumerians were weakened and ultimately destroyed by infighting, so too have the Kurds—particularly in **Eastern and Southern Kurdistan**—repeatedly lost unity, often at the cost of sovereignty and collective strength.

In terms of **cultural patterns**, Kurds today share striking similarities with the Sumerians—whether as a result of **direct genetic continuity** or the **deep assimilation of Sumerian cultural norms** into Kurdish identity over centuries. The Sumerians,

despite their monumental contributions to human civilization, ultimately failed to preserve their political autonomy. Likewise, the Kurds, having inherited the civilizational richness of their ancestors, have often **enriched the world without fully benefiting from their own heritage**.

For this reason, **the history of the Sumerians and their legacy cannot be separated from the history of the Kurdish people**. To study one is, in many respects, to study the other.

Section Six

6 – Fabricating, Rebranding, and Erasing Kurdish Heritage

Kurdistan is widely recognized as one of the **cradles of human civilization**. Across its vast mountain ranges, fertile valleys, and river basins lie the traces of millennia of continuous settlement by the **Kurdish people**, whose lands served as the stage for some of the earliest developments in urban life, architecture, and spiritual expression—stretching from the **Neolithic period** to the **medieval era**.

Yet, despite this extraordinary cultural wealth, the Kurds have been repeatedly **excluded from their own historical narrative**. Archaeological discoveries from Kurdish-inhabited regions are frequently **misclassified or rebranded** as *"Persian (Iranian), Turkish, Arab, Assyrian, Anatolian,"* or generically *"Mesopotamian,"* thereby deliberately removing them from their genuine Kurdish geographical and cultural context.

This **systematic erasure** has occurred through multiple, interlinked processes:

- **Renaming and reclassification** of sites and artefacts in official documents, museum catalogues, and exhibitions, to align them with the national narratives of the states occupying Kurdistan.
- **Suppression or concealment** of archaeological discoveries from Kurdish regions, preventing their inclusion in national and international academic discourse.
- **Transfer of artefacts and cultural materials** from their native Kurdish sites to the capitals of occupying powers or to foreign museums, often without any acknowledgment of their true origin.
- **Creation of distorted historical narratives**, designed to divert global attention from the authentic Kurdish provenance of these discoveries.
- **Deliberate neglect or destruction** of major Kurdish heritage sites, facilitating the erasure and assimilation of Kurdish civilization within imposed national identities.

The following subsections provide detailed case studies illustrating these patterns. Each example highlights a **Kurdish cultural or archaeological source** that has been looted, renamed, or reinterpreted, and whose authentic connection to the Kurdish people has been systematically denied.

Collectively, these examples reveal a **longstanding and coordinated policy of cultural suppression**, demonstrating that the erasure of Kurdish heritage is not incidental—it is a deliberate and sustained effort to remove the Kurdish nation from the historical record, leaving only faint traces "like ripples upon the surface of the sea."

6.1 – Ashqani Daryas (Daryas Lovers)

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Hashqane Hasanlu– Iran, West Azerbaijan Province, Naqadeh region.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
Ashqani Daryas(Daryas Lovers) – Eastern Kurdistan, Urmiye Province, city of Daryas.

Date:
Circa 800 BCE.

In **1973 CE**, excavations at the site of **Tepe Daryas** revealed one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of the ancient Near East. Among the ruins, archaeologists uncovered the intertwined skeletal remains of two individuals—apparently embracing each other at the moment of death—preserved beneath the ashes of a city destroyed by fire. This destruction dates to around **800 BCE**, corresponding to a period of violent upheaval in the Iron Age highlands of Daryas in the Urmiye region of Eastern Kurdistan.

Although the site lies deep within Kurdish historical territory, official publications and museum catalogues habitually classify Hasanlu within the framework of "Northwestern Iranian" archaeology, **avoiding any acknowledgment of its Kurdish geographical and cultural context**. Such descriptions obscure the site's connection to the **Zagros**

highland civilization, long associated with the indigenous Kurdish and Median peoples.

The most renowned artefact from the site—the **Golden Bowl of Daryas**—along with other significant finds, is now divided between the **National Museum of Tehran** and the **University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia**, far removed from their original Kurdish homeland. This displacement, both physical and cultural, reflects a broader and continuing **pattern of systematic appropriation**: Kurdish archaeological heritage is removed, renamed, and absorbed into non-Kurdish national narratives.

By stripping the Daryas discoveries of their authentic identity and rebranding them as merely "Iranian," the occupying powers have not only **erased the Kurdish contribution** to the early Iron Age civilizations of the Zagros but also reinforced a structure of cultural domination that extends beyond political control to the realm of history, scholarship, and memory.

“Ashqani Daryas” (the Kurdish name), later renamed “Hashqane Hasanlu” (the Azeri name), refers to the skeletal statues unearthed in 1973 CE at the archaeological site of Daryas Tepe

6.2 – The Salt Men of Chêrawa

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
The Salt Men of Chehrabad – Iran, Zanjan Province, Zagros Mountain Range.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
The Salt Men of Chêrawa – Eastern Kurdistan, Zangiyan Province, Chêrawa, Zagros Mountains.

Date:
Sasanian Period (approximately 5th century BCE to 4th century CE).

Between **1993 and 2010 CE**, a series of extraordinary archaeological discoveries were made in the **salt mines of Chêrawa**, located deep within the Zagros Mountains. Miners unearthed naturally mummified human remains—now known as *"The Salt Men"*—whose bodies, clothing, footwear, and personal belongings had been **preserved by the mineral-rich environment** for nearly two millennia. Radiocarbon analysis has dated these remains to the **Sasanian era**, revealing an unparalleled window into the daily life, social organization, and material culture of the ancient inhabitants of the Kurdish highlands.

The Chêrawa mines lie in a region historically inhabited by **Tati-Kurdish communities**, forming part of the broader ethnic and cultural continuum of the Zagros civilization. Archaeological, linguistic, and ethnographic evidence collectively confirm a deep **Kurdish–Zagros cultural continuity** spanning thousands of years. Yet, despite this clear heritage, official Iranian museum catalogues and academic publications consistently label the Salt Men of Chêrawa as examples of *"Persian cultural heritage,"* omitting any reference to the site's Kurdish geography or its ethnocultural context.

This deliberate misattribution exemplifies the **systematic rebranding of Kurdish archaeological heritage** as Persian within state-controlled institutions. Through such renaming, the indigenous cultural and historical identity of Kurdistan is effaced from the academic record and public consciousness alike. The case of Chêrawa stands as a powerful illustration of how the **politics of heritage and national identity** in Iran extend

beyond terminology—representing an intentional **appropriation of Kurdish material history** and a continued effort to detach Kurdish civilization from its rightful place within the ancient narrative of the Zagros world.

Saltman mummy with preserved hair and earring.

6.3 – The Zewa Treasure

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Ziwiye Treasure – Iran, Kordistan Province, near Saqqez.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Zewa (Zêwe) Treasure – Eastern Kurdistan, Sna Province, near the city of Saqqez.

Date:

Circa 7th century BCE.

In **1947 CE**, a remarkable assemblage of **gold, ivory, silver, and intricately decorated artefacts**—now known as the *Zewa Treasure*—was discovered near the city of Saqqez in Eastern Kurdistan. Dating to the late Iron Age, these findings reveal the artistic and political influence of the **Median civilization** in the Zagros region and underscore the role of this area as a major **cultural and urban centre** of the ancient highlands.

The collection includes a wide range of objects—gold plaques, ivory inlays, ceremonial vessels, and precious ornaments—characterized by refined technical mastery and a distinct Median-Zagros artistic vocabulary. The designs merge geometric precision with mythological and zoomorphic motifs, demonstrating both **indigenous craftsmanship** and **cross-regional interaction** across the ancient Near East.

Following their discovery, the treasures were dispersed through illicit trade and private acquisition, eventually reaching major museums and private collections across the world. Today, significant portions reside in **Tehran, London, Paris, and New York**, where they are consistently exhibited and catalogued under titles such as *"Iranian Median Art," "Assyrian," "Scythian,"* or simply *"Ancient Iranian Art."*

These classifications—whether deliberate or by omission—systematically **exclude any reference to the site's Kurdish geography and cultural context**, thereby severing the artefacts from their authentic origin in the highlands of Kurdistan. Such academic and institutional framing, repeated across publications and exhibitions, contributes to a broader **pattern of cultural displacement** in which Kurdish archaeological heritage is stripped of its national and historical identity.

Whether motivated by political intent or by entrenched disciplinary convention, this process of misattribution reinforces the **systematic erasure of Kurdish material culture** from both scholarly discourse and global heritage consciousness. The *Zewa Treasure*, rather than a mere collection of ancient artefacts, thus stands as a powerful symbol of the **contested ownership of history**—a reminder of how deeply Kurdish civilization is embedded in, yet repeatedly excluded from, the documented narrative of the ancient Near East.

Gold and ivory artifacts from Zewa.

6.4 – Bastam Fortress

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Bastam Fortress – Iran, West Azerbaijan Province, between Khoy and Maku.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
Bastam Fortress – Eastern Kurdistan, Urmiye Province, between the cities of Khoy and Maku.

Date:
Circa 7th century BCE.

Between **1969 and 1978 CE**, archaeological excavations revealed the remains of a vast **Urartian fortress** at Bastam, constructed during the reign of **King Rusa II**. The site includes large defensive walls, storage complexes, and administrative buildings,

illustrating the **strategic and political significance** of Urartian settlement in the highlands of the northern Zagros region.

Although Bastam lies within the historical heartland of Kurdish civilization, **official Iranian archaeological reports** continue to classify it merely as an *"Iranian Urartian site,"* avoiding any acknowledgment of its **Kurdish geographical and cultural context**. This form of academic framing erases the longstanding connection between the **ancient Urartian influence** and the **indigenous Kurdish population** of the Zagros Mountains.

The findings at Bastam, when properly contextualized, demonstrate a clear **continuity between the Urartian state tradition and the later Kurdish polities** that emerged across the same mountainous terrain. By reframing such sites exclusively within Persian or Anatolian narratives, state-sponsored archaeology actively suppresses the recognition of **Kurdistan's role as a core zone of ancient Near Eastern state formation** and as a continuous center of highland culture for over three millennia.

Urartian fortress at Bastam

6.5 – Ayanis Fortress

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Ayanis Fortress – Turkey, Van Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Ayanis Fortress – Northern Kurdistan, Van Province.

Date:

Circa 7th century BCE.

In **2023 CE**, archaeologists uncovered a **2,700-year-old royal burial** within the **Urartian fortress of Ayanis**, located on the eastern shore of **Lake Van** in Northern Kurdistan. The burial chamber contained numerous grave goods, including precious ornaments, metalwork, and ceremonial artefacts, offering valuable insight into the **political and social structure of the Urartian kingdom** during the late Iron Age.

Official Turkish archaeological reports immediately described the site as part of the *"Urartian cultural sphere of Eastern Anatolia,"* reinforcing the standard state narrative that absorbs the heritage of historical Kurdistan into the framework of Anatolian or Turkish archaeology. This **terminological appropriation**—by systematically avoiding reference to the Kurdish geography and population of the region—effectively erases the cultural continuity between the ancient highland civilizations of the **Zagros–Van basin** and the modern Kurdish people who have inhabited these lands for millennia.

The discovery at Ayanis therefore represents more than a remarkable archaeological event; it also highlights the **political dimension of heritage interpretation** in occupied Kurdistan. Through selective naming and categorization, the Kurdish identity of both the landscape and its ancient civilization is excluded from the historical narrative. The case of Ayanis thus exemplifies how **state-controlled archaeology** can serve as an instrument of **cultural marginalization**, severing the indigenous Kurdish connection to the enduring legacies of the Urartian and Zagros highland civilizations.

A 2,700-Year-Old Urartians' Ayanis Castle in North Kurdistan (Labelled as Turkey)

A 2,700-Year-Old Urartians' Ayanis Castle in North Kurdistan (Labelled as Turkey)

Elite burial at Ayanis Fortress in North Kurdistan (Labelled as Turkey)

2700-Year-Old Skeleton Unearthed at Ayanis Castle in North Kurdistan (Labelled as Turkey)

6.6 – Shanidar Cave

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Shanidar Cave – Iraq, Kurdistan Region, Bradost Range, Barzan.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Shanidar Cave – Southern Kurdistan, Duhok Province, Bradost Range, Barzan.

Date:

Approximately 65,000 – 35,000 BCE

Excavations at **Shanidar Cave**, conducted since the 1950s, revealed the remains of several **Neanderthals**, among them the famous burials of *the Flower Burial*, *Halan*, and *Namam*. Pollen traces found around the skeletons indicate that **flowers had been deliberately placed** with the deceased, implying one of the earliest known examples of **symbolic and ritual behaviour** in human history. This discovery transformed our

understanding of early human consciousness, empathy, and the beginnings of spiritual or communal identity.

Shanidar Cave lies deep within the **Bradost mountains of Barzan** in Southern Kurdistan. Although geographically and culturally situated in the Kurdish highlands, most international archaeological literature continues to describe it—often uncritically—as part of *"northern Iraq"* or *"Upper Mesopotamia."* This terminology, politically motivated and academically inherited, effectively **diminishes the Kurdish connection** to one of humanity's most important prehistoric sites.

In truth, Shanidar represents a **continuum of habitation in the Zagros Mountains**, linking the earliest known hominid presence with the later development of Kurdish mountain societies. Its evidence of care for the dead, social cooperation, and symbolic thought provides the oldest testimony to the **deep cultural ancestry of the Kurdish people** within the broader narrative of human evolution. To overlook its Kurdish geographical and cultural setting is not merely an error of terminology, but part of a wider **pattern of historical erasure** that disconnects the prehistoric heritage of the region from its living descendants.

Shanidar Cave entrance- South Kurdistan

6.7 – The Royal Mummy of Sna

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

The Royal Mummy of Sanandaj – Iran, Kurdistan Province, Hasanabad.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

The Royal Mummy of Sna – Eastern Kurdistan, Sna (Sanandaj) Province, region of Hasanawa.

Date:

Iron Age, approximately 1200–550 BCE.

In **2008 CE**, road construction workers in **Sna (Sanandaj)** unexpectedly uncovered more than **twenty Iron Age tombs** near the area of **Hasanawa** in Eastern Kurdistan. The graves contained human remains, clay vessels, and funerary objects of remarkable preservation, offering valuable potential for advancing the study of Kurdish archaeology and the cultural history of the Zagros region.

Public attention intensified when early reports claimed that one of the bodies belonged to a **royal Kurdish figure**, whose remains were astonishingly well preserved—possibly through a form of natural or intentional **mummification**. The discovery generated widespread speculation that this might represent one of the earliest examples of mummification in the Iranian plateau, predating known Achaemenid practices.

However, within weeks, **Iranian authorities officially denied** the discovery of any "royal mummy," dismissing the find as "a misinterpretation." Excavations were abruptly halted, the site was sealed, and subsequent academic reporting on the find nearly disappeared from state media and institutional publications. The remaining burials, despite their clear archaeological importance, were left with **minimal scholarly or public acknowledgment**.

This episode exemplifies a recurrent pattern in the **politics of archaeology in Kurdistan**: discoveries that could reveal an autonomous and sophisticated Kurdish past are often **politically downplayed or erased** through administrative control and

media censorship. The suppression of the “Royal Mummy of Sna” reveals how the **archaeological heritage of Kurdistan** remains a contested space, where cultural recognition is subject to the ideological imperatives of occupying states.

Had the discovery been properly investigated and preserved, it might have offered unprecedented insight into **Iron Age funerary practices**, **elite burials**, and the **socio-political complexity of ancient Kurdish polities** within the Zagros. Instead, it stands as yet another example of the **systematic marginalization** of Kurdish historical identity through the deliberate silencing of its material record.

In 2008, the IRNA news agency released an image of a royal mummy discovered in Sna (Sanandaj).

The video can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_eXiB8jRpQ

Royal mummy image

Rediscovery of Cuneiform Writing and Its Impact on the History of the Ancient Near East

The decipherment of **cuneiform writing** in the nineteenth century remains one of the greatest intellectual achievements in the history of modern scholarship. For more than three millennia, cuneiform had served as the **principal writing system of the Ancient Near East**, employed across the civilizations of **Sumer, Akkad, Elam, Assyria, Babylonia, the Hittites, and the Medes**, and eventually extending its influence to parts of the eastern Mediterranean world.

Cuneiform inscriptions recorded an extraordinary range of subjects: **royal decrees, legal codes, commercial contracts, astronomical observations, epic poetry, hymns, and daily transactions**. Together, they formed the foundation of governance, cultural continuity, and interregional diplomacy across a vast geographic and linguistic landscape.

By the fourth century BCE, cuneiform had gradually fallen out of use, replaced by **Aramaic and Greek alphabets**, which transformed the written culture of the region. With the disappearance of cuneiform literacy, the cultural and intellectual legacy of Mesopotamia and Media faded into obscurity. For many centuries thereafter, the wedge-shaped inscriptions carved on the monuments of the Zagros and Mesopotamia were viewed merely as decorative symbols, their meaning lost to time.

A major breakthrough occurred with the **rediscovery of the Behistun Inscription**, a monumental trilingual text carved high into a cliff face near modern Kermanshah in Eastern Kurdistan. The inscription provided the key to unlocking the ancient cuneiform system. Scholars have noted that both the stylistic features and narrative structure of the Behistun text may trace their origins to earlier **Median royal inscriptions**, dating from the reign of **King Deioces (ca. 678–647 BCE)**, the founder of the first Median capital at **Ecbatana (modern Hamadan)**.

In **1835 CE**, British officer **Henry Rawlinson**, aided by **local Kurdish guides**, succeeded—at great personal risk—in making detailed copies of the Behistun inscriptions. His transcriptions, which included royal lists, dynastic records, and historical commentaries, allowed philologists to reconstruct the phonetic system of

cuneiform. By **1857**, a controlled translation test organized by the **Royal Asiatic Society** confirmed the accuracy of the decipherment. This achievement opened an entirely new window into the political and cultural history of the ancient Near East, revealing the advanced administrative and intellectual world of the **Median and Mesopotamian civilizations** that had long been obscured by biblical and classical narratives.

Today, hundreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets have been recovered, providing direct insight into the languages, governance, sciences, and religious beliefs of ancient societies. For the Kurdish people—whose ancestors formed a major branch of the **Median civilization**—the rediscovery of cuneiform reestablished a profound historical connection, reviving an indigenous record of Kurdish linguistic and cultural heritage that had lain dormant for nearly two thousand years.

The 2008 Discovery near Sna (Sanandaj): Possible Tomb of King Deioces

The remarkable **archaeological discovery of 2008 CE** near the **Sna–Hasanawa road in Eastern Kurdistan** further deepened this connection between the cuneiform tradition and the history of the Median-Kurdish world. During road construction, workers unearthed **five ancient mummies** within an Iron Age burial complex—four belonging to soldiers, and one to a figure of extraordinary status whose tomb displayed unmistakable royal symbolism.

The fifth burial was exceptionally elaborate:

- The **body was preserved intact** inside a double-layered sarcophagus, the outer casing made of limestone and clay, and the inner one of unalloyed gold.
- Near the upper side of the coffin, **one or two small golden chests** were found, containing precious funerary items.
- A **mace or ceremonial sceptre** was placed beside the sarcophagus, symbolizing power and kingship.
- Two **intricately engraved gold plaques**, one depicting a fish and the other a halo, were attached to the body's chest and shoulders, both inscribed in **cuneiform script**.
- A **carved mural** was visible on the inner wall behind the coffin, while various bronze weapons and ceremonial objects were arranged around it—altogether suggesting a burial of royal or princely rank.

The site lay only **500 meters** from the known **Zagros–Sanandaj archaeological zone**, an area long recognized for its Median-era cultural layers. Local researchers and independent scholars soon proposed that the mummy could belong to **King Deioces**, the first recorded ruler of the Medes (r. ca. 678–647 BCE), famed for uniting the Median tribes, founding **Ecbatana** as his capital, and establishing the earliest form of centralized Kurdish governance. His reign of roughly thirty-one years is regarded as a foundational era in both Median and Kurdish political history.

Politically, the discovery was highly sensitive. According to multiple reports, shortly after its announcement, the **Iranian authorities intervened**, and within days the mummies and associated artefacts were **airlifted by military helicopter** to

undisclosed locations under state supervision. No formal academic publication or follow-up excavation report has appeared since.

This abrupt silencing reflects a broader **politicization of archaeology in Kurdistan**, wherein discoveries that may reinforce Kurdish historical continuity or challenge centralized national narratives are swiftly removed from public discourse. If confirmed authentic, the Sanandaj mummy could represent one of the most significant archaeological finds in Kurdish history, because:

- It provides a **direct physical link** between the cuneiform-literate world and the earliest historically attested Kurdish–Median monarchy.
- It offers rare evidence of **royal mummification and funerary practices** in the Median period, contributing to our understanding of ancient Kurdish ritual traditions.
- It bridges **epigraphic and material records**, connecting cuneiform inscriptions with preserved remains of a historically documented Kurdish ruler.

Such a discovery, if fully verified and studied, would profoundly enrich our understanding of **Kurdistan's role in the cultural and political evolution of the Ancient Near East**, illuminating the central place of the Kurdish people in the development of early statehood, art, and written civilization.

A digitalised image of the above mumification- From Pelvic Plate (or Funerary Plaque).

A digitalised image of the above mumification- From chest plate (pectoral plate or pectoral plaque).

It is possible that this represents an **ancient Kurdish script**, once used during the **Median Empire**. This hypothesis is particularly intriguing and deserves further investigation. It is hoped that, in the future, researchers will be able to **decipher and conduct specialized studies** on this writing system, shedding new light on the **linguistic and cultural heritage of the ancient Kurds**.

A digitalised image of the above mumification. Probable Royal Median Mummy — Diyako (Deioces), First King of the Medes

6.8 – Burial of the Noblewoman of Yagheh Tepe

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Yagheh Tepe – Iran, Kordistan Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Yagheh Tepe – Eastern Kurdistan, Sna Province, city of Sna (Sanandaj).

Date:

Early Iron Age

In early **2025 CE**, an archaeological mission at **Yagheh Tepe**, located near **Sna (Sanandaj)** in **Eastern Kurdistan**, uncovered an exceptional burial belonging to a **Kurdish noblewoman**. The discovery offers valuable insight into the artistic sophistication and symbolic depth of early Iron Age highland cultures of the Zagros region.

The burial chamber contained a **finely crafted coffin** adorned with elaborate carvings of **serpents and felines**, executed with extraordinary artistic precision. Such motifs, long associated with **protection, sacred power, and spiritual guardianship**, are deeply rooted in the religious iconography of ancient Kurdish-Zagros societies and reflect a cosmology that valued both strength and renewal. The careful arrangement of the design indicates not only a high degree of technical mastery but also the presence of established **funerary symbolism** consistent with the **Hurrian-Elamite-Median cultural continuum** of the region.

This discovery, widely reported by domestic and international media for its artistic and technical excellence, nonetheless **omitted any reference to its Kurdish cultural and geographical context**. Official accounts identified it merely as an “Iranian” find, continuing the recurrent pattern in which archaeological sites within Kurdistan are stripped of their indigenous identity and absorbed into state-sanctioned narratives.

Such omission exemplifies a broader **systemic marginalization** of Kurdish archaeological heritage, whereby discoveries in Kurdish regions are catalogued under

neutral or nationalized labels that obscure their true origins. This practice not only diminishes the historical and cultural significance of the finds but also perpetuates a form of **academic colonialism** that detaches material culture from the living communities that produced it.

The burial of the **Noblewoman of Yagheh Tepe** stands as a profound testament to the creative and spiritual sophistication of ancient Kurdish civilization. Acknowledging its rightful cultural context restores both the historical integrity of the discovery and the continuity of Kurdish heritage in the broader story of the ancient Near East.

The burial of the princess at Yagha Tepe.

6.9 – Haskif

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Hasankeyf – Turkey, Batman Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
Haskif – Northern Kurdistan, historical city on the Tigris River, within the present-day borders of Batman Province.

Date:

Human occupation dating back to circa 10,000 BCE.

Situated along the banks of the **Tigris River** in **Northern Kurdistan**, the ancient city of **Haskif** stands among the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world. Archaeological evidence traces human presence in the area back more than **twelve millennia**, making it a site of exceptional significance in the history of human civilization and settlement in the Zagros–Mesopotamian frontier zone.

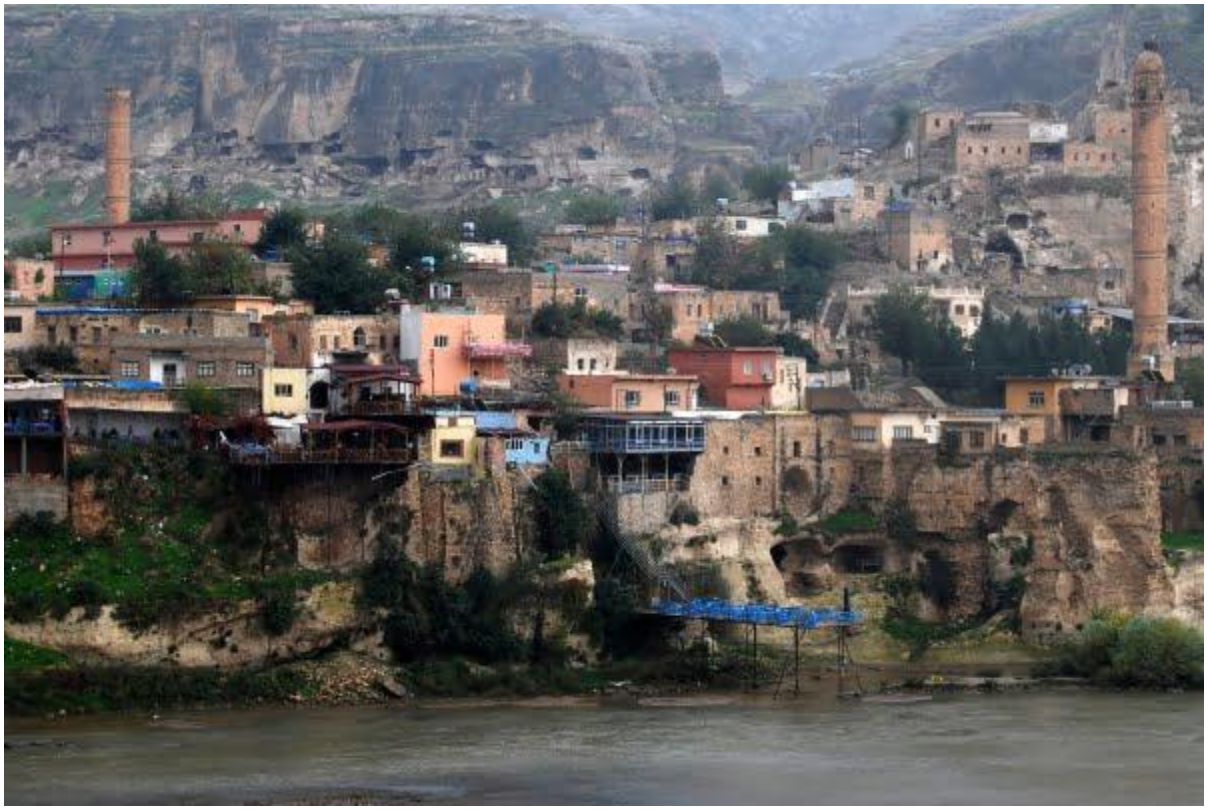
Throughout its long history—from the **Prehistoric and Bronze Age periods** through the **Roman, Islamic, and Medieval eras**—Haskif served as a vital center of trade, culture, and spirituality. Its extensive **cave dwellings**, **Roman fortifications**, **medieval mosques**, **bridges**, and **minarets** together form a layered cultural landscape, reflecting the successive epochs of Kurdish, Hurrian, and later Islamic civilization. For thousands of years, the city functioned as a **living record of Kurdish continuity**, linking the earliest communities of the Zagros highlands to the present-day Kurdish population of the region.

Until its submergence in **2019**, Haskif remained a vibrant Kurdish settlement. The construction of the **Ilisu Dam**, part of Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP), resulted in the deliberate flooding of the city's ancient core. Although a handful of monuments—including parts of the **Zeynel Bey Mausoleum** and certain **Artuqid-era structures**—were relocated to an artificial "cultural park," the majority of the site was permanently **submerged beneath the dam reservoir**.

The **inundation of Haskif** represents one of the most significant and irreversible acts of cultural destruction in the modern history of Kurdistan. It erased over **12,000 years of documented human heritage**, silencing a unique archaeological record that connected prehistoric settlement patterns to the urban and spiritual traditions of later Kurdish societies. The official Turkish narrative frames the dam as a project of national progress, yet its consequences reveal a deeper political intent: the **systematic**

effacement of Kurdish historical presence in the region through the physical annihilation of its material heritage.

The submersion of Haskif is not merely a local loss—it is an international tragedy. It stands as a living example of **twenty-first-century cultural colonization**, in which the landscapes and legacies of a people are sacrificed to state-centered narratives of modernization and control. For the Kurdish nation, Haskif embodies both the **depth of their ancestral roots** and the **ongoing struggle against historical erasure**—a reminder that even when the stones of a civilization are drowned, its memory endures in the collective consciousness of its people.



The city of Haskif before it was submerged under the Ilısu Dam.

6.10 – The Kalmakareh Cave Treasure

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Kalmakareh Cave – Iran, Lorestan Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Kalmakareh Cave – Eastern Kurdistan, Lorestan Province.

Date:

Early 1st millennium BCE

Nestled within the rugged mountains of **Lorestan in Eastern Kurdistan**, the **Kalmakareh Cave** constitutes one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of the modern era in the ancient Near East. Unearthed in **1989**, the cave yielded a vast assemblage of artefacts—predominantly **gold, silver, and bronze ritual objects, ornaments, and ceremonial vessels**—dating to the **early first millennium BCE**. The scale and refinement of this hoard immediately identified it as one of the richest prehistoric treasuries ever found in the Zagros region.

The artistic and symbolic features of the Kalmakareh artefacts reveal a highly sophisticated metallurgical and iconographic tradition, deeply embedded in the **indigenous Lur-Kurdish cultural milieu** and closely connected to the **Elamite and Median civilizations** of the ancient Zagros. Their designs, often combining geometric precision with mythological motifs, attest to an advanced religious and aesthetic sensibility within the highland societies of Kurdistan, bridging the late Bronze and early Iron Ages.

Shortly after its discovery, however, the site suffered **extensive looting**. Thousands of items were illicitly removed and dispersed through the international black market, while only a small portion of the treasure was officially recovered and deposited in Iranian museums. The surviving objects—displayed primarily in Tehran and other urban centers—are routinely labeled as part of the **"Western Iranian cultural horizon,"** a term that effectively erases both the **Kurdish provenance** of the cave and its role within the wider cultural geography of the Zagros.

This process of reclassification forms part of a consistent pattern in **Iranian state archaeology**, which systematically **appropriates Kurdish-Elamite heritage** into a homogenized "Persian-Iranian" narrative. In official publications and exhibitions,

Kalmakareh is seldom acknowledged as a Kurdish site, despite its location deep within the historical heartland of Kurdistan and its evident continuity with local metallurgical and artistic traditions.

The **Kalmakareh Cave Treasure** thus exemplifies the broader phenomenon of **cultural dispossession and historical rebranding** that defines the treatment of Kurdish archaeological heritage under occupying regimes. What should stand as evidence of an ancient and independent Kurdish-Zagros civilization has instead been fragmented, repackaged, and reattributed to serve modern state narratives. Recognizing the true context of Kalmakareh restores not only the integrity of its archaeological record but also affirms the enduring creative legacy of the Kurdish people—whose artistry, spirituality, and technical mastery have shaped the highland civilizations of Western Asia since the dawn of recorded history.

Kalmakareh Cave

Discovered from Kalmakareh Cave

Discovered from Kalmakareh Cave

Discovered from Kalmakareh Cave

6.11 – Taq-e Bostan

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Taq-e Bostan – Iran, Kermanshah Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Taq-e Bostan – Eastern Kurdistan, Kirmaşan (Kermanshah) Province, near Bistun.

Date:

4th century CE

Carved into the mountain slopes of **Kirmaşan (Kermanshah)** in Eastern Kurdistan, **Taq-e Bostan** ("Arch of the Garden") represents one of the most distinguished examples of **royal Sasanian art and architecture**. Dating to the 4th century CE, the site consists of a series of monumental rock reliefs depicting royal investitures, hunting scenes, and divine iconography, all set against the dramatic natural landscape of the Zagros Mountains.

Taq-e Bostan reflects the **height of artistic and political expression under the Sasanian Empire**, which was founded and ruled by dynasties of Kurdish–Median origin. The reliefs include images of Sasanian monarchs receiving the divine ring of kingship, figures of Ahura Mazda and Anahita, and elaborate portrayals of royal hunts symbolizing strength, justice, and divine favor. The sophistication of its design and the technical mastery of its execution attest to a long tradition of monumental artistry that developed indigenously in the highland regions of Kurdistan.

Despite the site's clear geographical and cultural location within the Kurdish heartland, **official Iranian narratives** consistently describe Taq-e Bostan as a symbol of "Persian" or "Iranian" heritage, omitting any reference to its Kurdish context or to the ethnic origins of the Sasanian elite who commissioned it. This state-sanctioned framing effectively **recasts a Kurdish monumental legacy as Persian**, displacing its authentic historical and cultural identity.

Such reclassification is not merely terminological—it forms part of a wider **political and cultural project of appropriation**, through which Kurdish contributions to the artistic and civilizational record of Iran and Mesopotamia are systematically erased or absorbed into imperial and modern national identities. As in numerous other archaeological sites across Kurdistan, the misrepresentation of Taq-e Bostan reveals a deliberate pattern of **heritage manipulation**, designed to consolidate territorial and historical claims by the occupying power.

Moreover, Iranian archaeological publications and museum materials rarely acknowledge that the **Sasanian capital of Kirmaşan** lay within the broader Kurdish–Median cultural zone. This omission not only distorts the ethnocultural geography of the period but also silences the continuity between the Sasanian royal centers and the indigenous Kurdish population that has inhabited these mountains for millennia.

Taq-e Bostan therefore stands as both an artistic masterpiece and a **testament to the ongoing politics of cultural erasure**. Its reliefs, carved into the living rock of Kurdistan, bear witness to a civilization that bridged the ancient Median and Sasanian worlds—a Kurdish-rooted imperial tradition later appropriated by external narratives. Recognizing the site's authentic identity restores its place within the **continuum of Kurdish historical and artistic heritage**, ensuring that it is no longer remembered merely as a monument of empire, but as a creation of the land and people from whom that empire arose.

Sasanian rock relief, Taq-e Bostan

6.12 – The Sanctuary of the Eyes of Afrin

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Ain Dara – Syria, Afrin District.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

The Sanctuary of the Eyes of Afrin – Western Kurdistan (Rojava), Afrin Province, city of Afrin.

Date:

Circa 1300–740 BCE

The **Sanctuary of the Eyes of Afrin**, known in official literature as *Ain Dara*, was one of the most remarkable ritual and architectural complexes of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Situated in the Afrin region of Western Kurdistan—an area historically and demographically Kurdish—the site represents a monumental expression of the **Hurrian-Hittite cultural sphere** that flourished across northern Mesopotamia and the Zagros foothills.

Constructed primarily of finely carved **basalt blocks** and decorated with richly detailed reliefs, the sanctuary features colossal footprints, guardian lions, sphinxes, and hybrid deities, evoking profound mythological and cosmological symbolism. Scholars have long noted striking architectural parallels between this temple and the biblical **Temple of Solomon**, as described in the Hebrew Scriptures. Its monumental form, ceremonial layout, and sculptural program attest to a sophisticated highland civilization whose cultural influence extended across the ancient Near East.

Dating from approximately **1300–740 BCE**, the Sanctuary of the Eyes served as a major center of worship and ritual activity throughout the Late Bronze Age and into the early Iron Age. Its artistic vocabulary and architectural mastery reveal the advanced spiritual and technical traditions of the indigenous Kurdish-Hurrian populations of the region. In this sense, the site embodies a deep **continuity between the ancient Kurdish civilizations of the Zagros and the living culture of modern Kurdistan**, bridging more than three millennia of history.

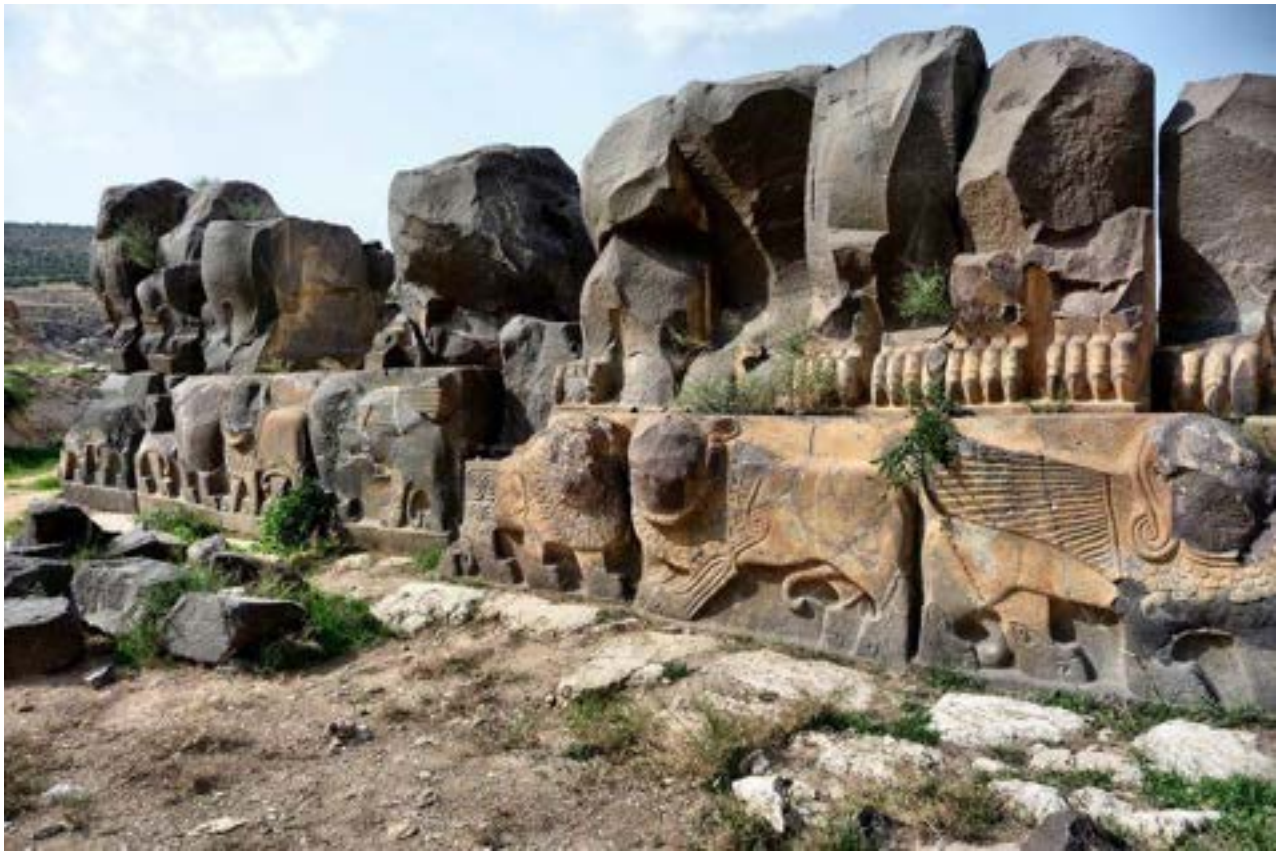
In **January 2018**, during the Turkish military invasion of Afrin, the sanctuary suffered catastrophic destruction. Aerial bombardments obliterated nearly **90% of the complex**, shattering its sculpted reliefs and leveling much of the structure. The international archaeological community condemned the assault as a violation of international cultural heritage law and a grave act of **war-time cultural vandalism**.

Despite the site's clear Kurdish geographic and cultural context, **Turkish, Arab, and even several international reports** continue to describe the sanctuary exclusively within "Syrian" or "Hittite" frameworks, with little or no reference to its **Kurdish historical setting**. This selective framing exemplifies a broader **anti-Kurdish policy of cultural erasure**, whereby archaeological sites in Kurdish regions are systematically stripped of their indigenous identity and subsumed under the national heritage of occupying states.

The destruction of the Sanctuary of the Eyes of Afrin thus represents more than the loss of an ancient monument—it symbolizes an enduring campaign of **cultural annihilation** aimed at erasing the Kurdish presence from its own historical landscape. Recognizing the site within its authentic Kurdish and Hurrian context restores not only the memory of a sacred temple, but also affirms the resilience of a civilization whose heritage has survived despite repeated attempts at physical and ideological obliteration.

The Temple of the Eyes in Afrin (Ain Dara) in 2018, prior to the Turkish occupation attacks.

The Temple of the Eyes in Afrin (Ain Dara) in 2018, prior to the Turkish occupation attacks.



The Temple of the Eyes in Afrin (Ain Dara) in 2018, prior to the Turkish occupation attacks.

The Temple of the Eyes in Afrin (Ain Dara) after the 2018 aerial bombardments by the Turkish occupiers, who deliberately destroyed this ancient Kurdish temple.

6.13 – Girê Navrast

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Göbekli Tepe – Turkey, Şanlıurfa Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Girê Navrast (Central Mound)– Northern Kurdistan, Riha (Urfa) Province, city of Riha.

Date:

Circa 9600–8000 BCE

Located in the highlands of **Northern Kurdistan**, the monumental sanctuary of **Girê Navrast** (known in Turkish as *Göbekli Tepe*) represents one of the most extraordinary archaeological discoveries of the modern era. Dated to the **Pre-Pottery Neolithic period**, it is widely regarded as the **oldest known monumental ritual complex in the world**, preceding the advent of agriculture and settled urban life by several millennia.

The site is composed of a series of circular and oval enclosures built from massive **T-shaped limestone pillars**, many of which are elaborately carved with reliefs of animals and abstract symbols representing spiritual or cosmological concepts. These structures demonstrate advanced architectural and symbolic sophistication, revealing that complex belief systems and organized ritual practice existed in the **Zagros–Upper Mesopotamian region** long before the traditionally accepted emergence of civilization.

The discovery of Girê Navrast fundamentally transformed the academic understanding of early human history. It revealed that **religious and communal organization preceded agriculture**, rather than emerging from it—a paradigm shift that redefined the narrative of human cultural evolution. The site's scale, craftsmanship, and iconography attest to an advanced social structure rooted in the indigenous highland cultures of **Kurdistan and the northern Mesopotamian corridor**.

Despite this profound global importance, **official Turkish and UNESCO narratives** consistently classify Göbekli Tepe as part of the **"Anatolian heritage,"** omitting its authentic Kurdish geographic and cultural setting. The site lies firmly within **Riha (Urfa)**

in Northern Kurdistan, an area historically and ethnographically Kurdish. Yet, modern state representations deliberately detach the monument from its Kurdish context and recast it within a nationalized “Turkish” identity.

This deliberate reattribution reflects a broader pattern of **cultural assimilation and heritage nationalism**. By claiming Girê Navrast as a symbol of “Turkish civilization,” state institutions effectively appropriate one of humanity’s earliest sacred sites while erasing the **indigenous Kurdish connection** to the land, its builders, and its continuous cultural memory. The political rebranding of the site thus operates not merely as an act of academic misclassification, but as an extension of a long-standing policy of **Kurdish cultural erasure** across Northern Kurdistan.

The continuing excavations at Girê Navrast reveal an enduring paradox: while the site is celebrated as a milestone in world prehistory, its **authentic cultural identity remains suppressed** under layers of modern geopolitical rhetoric. Recognizing Girê Navrast within its true **Kurdish–Zagros civilizational context** restores its historical integrity and challenges the nationalist narratives that seek to appropriate the deepest roots of human spirituality for political ends.

Carved pillars at Girê Navrast

6.14 – The Sacred Source of Kanîya Zalal

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Durupınar – Turkey, Ağrı Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
Kanîya Zalal – Northern Kurdistan, Ağrı Province, Mount Ağrı (Ararat), near the village of Özengili, situated between the Kurdish cities of Ağrı (Bakur) and Maku (Rojhilat).

Date:
Undetermined (natural geological formation)

The site known today as **Kanîya Zalal** ("The Pure Spring") lies high in the mountains of Northern Kurdistan, within the Ağrı region and near the frontier of Eastern Kurdistan. It consists of a large, boat-shaped geological formation embedded in the foothills of **Mount Ararat**, the legendary peak long revered in ancient Mesopotamian and Near Eastern traditions. Though geological research generally identifies the formation as a **natural geological phenomenon**, its shape and placement have captivated both the scientific and religious imagination since the mid-twentieth century.

In global media and religious tourism, Kanîya Zalal has been promoted as a potential **resting place of Noah's Ark**, a tradition rooted in the narratives of the **Hebrew Bible, the Quran,** and earlier Mesopotamian flood myths such as that of **Utnapishtim** in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The site's discovery in the 1950s drew international attention, and since then it has become a locus of competing interpretations—geological, archaeological, and theological alike.

Official Turkish accounts, however, present the site as part of the **"national heritage of Turkey,"** embedding it within a broader framework of "Anatolian civilization." This classification deliberately erases the **Kurdish historical and cultural geography** of the region, despite the fact that the site lies within **Northern Kurdistan**, an area continuously inhabited by Kurdish communities for millennia.

This rebranding of Kanîya Zalal is emblematic of a wider state policy of **cultural reattribution and historical displacement**, wherein sacred, mythological, and archaeological landmarks located in Kurdistan are absorbed into the national narratives of the occupying states. Through such redefinitions, the Kurdish dimension of these landscapes is systematically suppressed, while their symbolic and spiritual significance is recontextualized to serve the **ideological frameworks of state-sponsored heritage politics**.

In its deeper cultural meaning, Kanîya Zalal embodies the intersection of **natural wonder, sacred memory, and historical erasure**. Whether interpreted as a geological marvel or as a remnant of a primordial myth, it stands as a potent reminder of the enduring struggle over cultural ownership and historical truth in Kurdistan. Recognizing the site within its authentic **Kurdish geographic and mythological setting** restores not only the integrity of its past but also its rightful place within the living spiritual heritage of the Kurdish people and the broader ancient Near East.

The Sacred Source of Kanîya Zalal formation

6.15 – Nibor (Nippur, Nifr)

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Nifr – Iraq, Al-Qadisiyyah Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Nibor – Southern Kurdistan, Nibur Province, city of Nibur.

Date:

Established circa 5000 BCE

In antiquity, the city of **Nibor (Nippur)** was among the most sacred religious and cultural centers of the **Sumerians**, later also venerated by the **Gutians** and **Kassites**—ancient peoples of the Zagros Mountains, regarded as the ancestors of the Kurds. Situated in the heart of Southern Kurdistan, Nibur functioned for millennia as the principal sanctuary of **Enlil**, the Sumerian god of wind and sovereignty, and was long considered the spiritual capital of Mesopotamia.

Archaeological excavations reveal that Nibor's continuous occupation dates back to the **fifth millennium BCE**, marking it as one of the oldest known urban settlements in the region. While it initially flourished under the Sumerians, the city subsequently came under the influence and administration of the **Gutian** and **Kassite dynasties**, both originating from the Zagros highlands. These highland peoples, who maintained deep cultural and linguistic ties to the later Kurdish populations, played a decisive role in shaping the religious and political continuity of Mesopotamian civilization after the decline of Sumerian rule.

Despite this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural legacy, museum exhibitions and academic publications continue to present Nippur primarily through a **Sumerian lens**, marginalizing or omitting the later Gutian and Kassite periods. This selective representation effectively erases the Kurdish dimension of Nibor's history, obscuring the city's role as a site of **highland–lowland cultural synthesis** and the active participation of Kurdish-speaking populations in the intellectual and religious life of post-Sumerian Mesopotamia.

Moreover, historical evidence suggests that **during the Sasanian era**, Nibor retained its sanctity as one of the most revered **Zoroastrian centers** of the empire—an empire of distinctly Kurdish origin. Yet, this religious and cultural continuity is almost entirely absent from mainstream historiography. The absence of recognition for Nibor's enduring role within the Kurdish Zoroastrian tradition exemplifies a broader pattern of **cultural and historical erasure**, wherein Kurdish contributions to the civilizational heritage of Mesopotamia have been systematically suppressed or subsumed under external identities.

Restoring Nibor to its rightful context thus entails more than correcting a geographical misattribution—it reclaims a crucial link in the **continuum of Kurdish cultural and religious history**, bridging the early Sumerian world with the later Kurdish-Zoroastrian epoch, and reaffirming the Kurdish presence at the spiritual heart of ancient Mesopotamia.

Nibor archaeological mound

6.16 – The Processional Way of Babylon

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
The Processional Way of Babylon – Iraq, Babylon Province, city of Babylon.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
The Processional Way of Babylon – Southern Kurdistan, Babylon Province, city of Babylon.

Date:
Flourished between approximately 1894 and 539 BCE

The ancient city of **Babylon** stands as one of the most iconic urban centers of the ancient world, celebrated for its architectural grandeur and monumental design. Among its most remarkable achievements is the **Ishtar Gate**, constructed under King **Nebuchadnezzar II** in the 6th century BCE and later excavated by German archaeologists in the early twentieth century. Much of the gate was transported to Berlin, where it was reconstructed and remains a centerpiece of the **Pergamon Museum**.

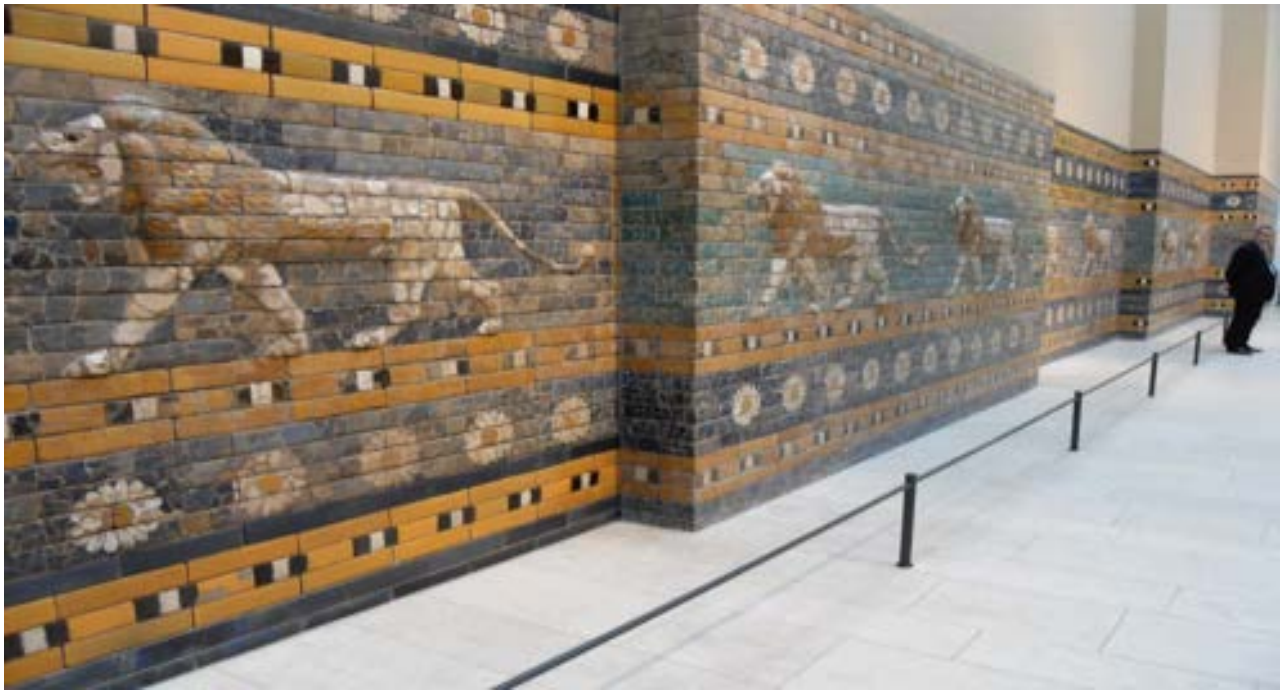
While Babylon is universally presented as the heart of **Babylonian civilization**, historical and archaeological evidence demonstrates sustained interaction between the city and the highland peoples of the **Zagros Mountains**—notably the **Gutians, Kassites, and Medes**, who were the ancestors of the modern Kurdish people. Throughout successive periods, these Zagros groups exerted political, cultural, and economic influence over Babylon, at times even administering the region or integrating its institutions into their broader systems of governance.

Despite this documented interconnection, modern academic and museum narratives almost exclusively portray Babylon as an isolated Mesopotamian phenomenon. Official interpretations rarely acknowledge the enduring **Zagros–Kurdish influence** on the development of Babylonian statecraft, religion, and artistic symbolism. The **absence of such acknowledgment** reflects a broader pattern of historiographical separation in which the great centers of ancient Mesopotamia are conceptually detached from the indigenous civilizations of Kurdistan.

This selective framing serves both political and ideological purposes. By omitting the role of the Kurdish–Zagros peoples in the long continuum of Mesopotamian civilization, occupying powers and later national narratives have effectively marginalized the **Kurdish contribution** to the region's urban and intellectual heritage. Babylon, rather than existing in isolation, was a node in a **wider cultural network** that linked the river valleys of Mesopotamia with the mountains of the Zagros—a network that nurtured the exchange of technologies, beliefs, and artistic traditions across early Western Asia.

Reinstating this historical continuity restores Babylon to its rightful place within the **Kurdish–Zagros civilizational landscape**, where mountain and plain coexisted as mutually dependent spheres of human development. The city's legacy, therefore, must be understood not only as a triumph of Mesopotamian ingenuity but also as a testament to the enduring creativity and influence of the **indigenous highland peoples of Kurdistan** who shaped its history and sustained its cultural vitality for centuries.

The Processional Way of Babylon



The Processional Way of Babylon

6.17 – The Lion Reliefs of Nineveh

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Lion Reliefs of Assur – Iraq, Mosul Region.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:
Lion Reliefs of Nineveh – Southern Kurdistan, Nineveh Province, city of Nineveh.

Date:
Circa 7th century BCE

The ancient city of **Nineveh**, located within the modern province of **Nineveh in Southern Kurdistan**, served as the **final imperial capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire** during the reigns of **Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE),** and **Ashurbanipal (668–627 BCE)**. As one of the most monumental centers of the ancient world, it yielded an unparalleled corpus of artistic and textual material that continues to define our understanding of Mesopotamian civilization.

Among the most celebrated discoveries from Nineveh are the **lion-hunt reliefs**—masterpieces of monumental art depicting royal hunts that symbolized divine favor and imperial dominance—as well as the vast **cuneiform archives** unearthed within the royal library of Ashurbanipal. Today, these treasures form the centerpiece of several major collections, most notably in the **British Museum**, where they are exhibited as icons of “Assyrian civilization.”

However, in both museum catalogues and academic discourse, these artifacts are routinely labeled as “Assyrian” or “Iraqi,” with **no acknowledgment of their Kurdish–Zagros geographical and cultural setting**. The city of Nineveh—today situated within the historical heartland of Kurdistan—is systematically detached from its indigenous context. Such omissions perpetuate the broader **erasure of Kurdish presence** in the historical and cultural narratives of ancient Mesopotamia.

Throughout the long history of the Assyrian Empire, the highland populations of the **Zagros Mountains**—the ancestors of the modern Kurds—played a fundamental role in the empire’s **military, economic, and cultural systems**. These communities provided troops, resources, and artistic influences that helped shape the empire’s structure and aesthetics. Yet modern historiography has largely ignored these contributions, presenting the imperial record as an isolated phenomenon of “Assyrian genius.”

This selective framing represents more than an academic oversight—it is a deliberate **act of historical marginalization**, rooted in the political and cultural agendas of later occupying powers. By omitting the Kurdish identity of Nineveh’s landscape and people, the global heritage discourse reinforces a narrative in which the Kurds appear as outsiders to the very lands that bore the earliest cities of human civilization.

Restoring Nineveh to its rightful place within the **Kurdish–Zagros historical continuum** challenges this long-standing distortion. The **lion reliefs**, far from being mere symbols of imperial might, stand as enduring witnesses to a shared cultural world that united the highland and lowland civilizations of ancient Kurdistan—an artistic legacy that belongs not only to the Assyrian state but to the broader heritage of the Kurdish people who sustained and shaped it.

The Lion Reliefs of Nineveh

6.18 – The Eye Idols

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Eye Idols – Syria, Tell Brak, Hasakah region.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Eye Idols – Western Kurdistan (Rojava), Hasakah Province, city of Hasakah, Tell Brak.

Date:

Late Uruk Period, ca. 3500–3300 BCE

The so-called **Eye Idols**, a collection of small marble figurines characterized by large, stylized eyes and minimalist human forms, were discovered at **Tell Brak**, located in the Hasakah region of **Western Kurdistan (Rojava)**. These figurines constitute one of the earliest known forms of **symbolic religious art** in human history and are emblematic of the spiritual and ritual culture of the **Late Uruk period**.

Archaeological analysis suggests that the figurines were votive offerings used in **temples or communal shrines**, representing worshippers in perpetual devotion. Their exaggerated eyes—often carved in groups or layers—may have symbolized **divine watchfulness**, **spiritual awareness**, or **ancestral presence**. The simplicity of their form and repetition of the eye motif indicate a shared religious vocabulary that extended across the highland and lowland societies of northern Mesopotamia and the Zagros frontier.

Tell Brak, known in early texts as *Nagar*, was among the **earliest urban and ceremonial centers** of the ancient Near East. Yet in museum catalogues and academic publications, these figurines are routinely labeled as belonging to *"Northern Mesopotamia"* or *"Syria,"* with no reference to their **Kurdish–Zagros cultural and geographical context**. The majority of the Eye Idols recovered from Tell Brak are now housed in the **British Museum**, where they are displayed under neutral or state-sanctioned classifications that omit acknowledgment of their Kurdish provenance.

This absence is not a neutral act of categorization but part of a **systematic historical pattern** in which the indigenous identity of the Kurdish region is obscured beneath the political boundaries and narratives of the modern states that occupy it. Whether through the policies of the Syrian government or the institutional framing of Western archaeology, the **erasure of the Kurdish context** from such discoveries reflects an ongoing process of cultural appropriation and historiographical distortion.

In reality, the **Eye Idols of Tell Brak** represent one of the earliest artistic manifestations of spiritual consciousness in human civilization. Their discovery within a Kurdish-inhabited region affirms the **antiquity and continuity of cultural life in Kurdistan**, predating the formation of later empires by millennia. The enduring image of the watchful eye—emerging from the heart of the Zagros–Mesopotamian world—stands as both a symbol of humanity's first encounters with the divine and a silent testament to the **deep-rooted civilizational heritage of the Kurdish people**.

The Eye Idols

6.19 – The Palace of Nimrud

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Palace of Nimrud – Iraq, Nineveh Province, near Mosul.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Palace of Nimrud – Southern Kurdistan, Nineveh Province, city of Nineveh.

Date:

Neo-Assyrian Period, 9th–7th centuries BCE

The ancient site of **Nimrud**, known in antiquity as **Kalhu**, was one of the principal capitals of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and a major center of political, artistic, and religious life in **Southern Kurdistan**. Excavated in the mid-nineteenth century by the

British archaeologist **Austen Henry Layard**, the site yielded some of the most striking architectural and sculptural masterpieces of the ancient Near East.

The monumental stone reliefs uncovered within the **royal palace of Nimrud** depict scenes of royal processions, military campaigns, divine rituals, and mythological beings, all executed with remarkable technical precision and narrative dynamism. These reliefs came to define what modern scholarship calls "Neo-Assyrian art," serving as visual affirmations of imperial ideology and kingship.

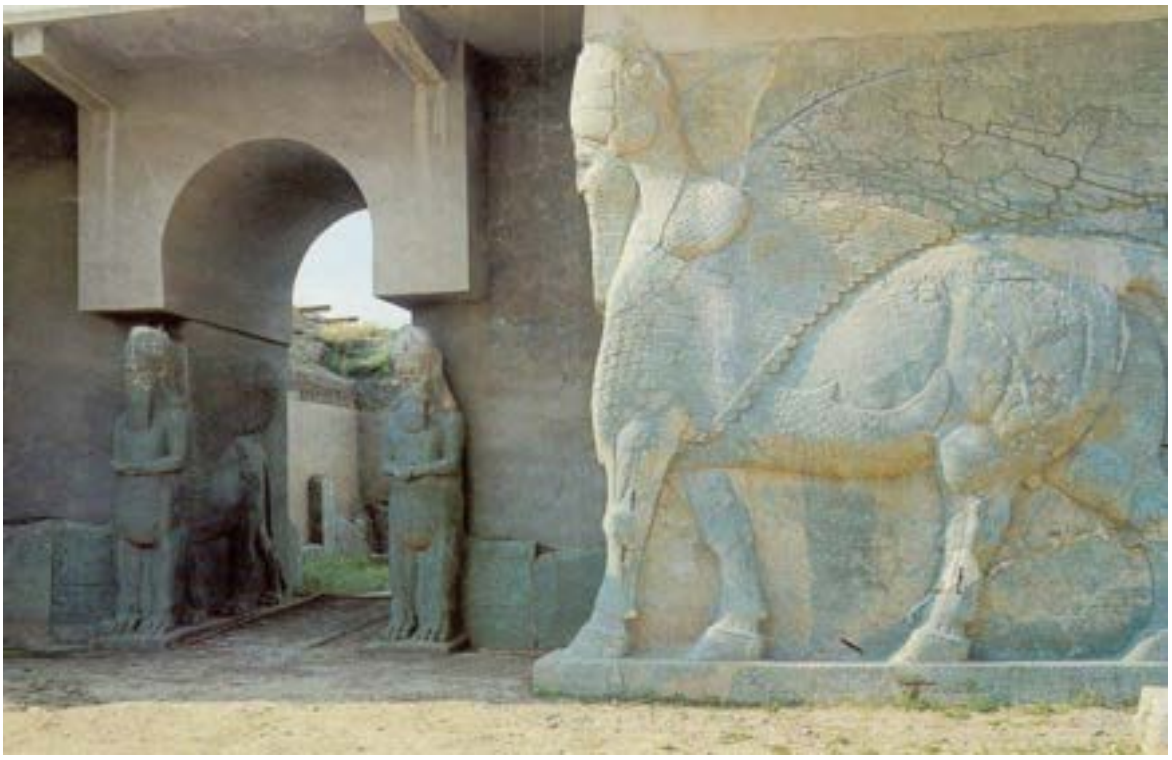
Following their discovery, numerous large slabs—some weighing several tons—were **transported to London** and installed in the **British Museum**, where they remain among its most prominent exhibits. In museum catalogues and academic references, these works are consistently classified as *"Neo-Assyrian,"* with no reference to their **Kurdish–Zagros geographical context**.

Yet the city of **Nimrud lies squarely within the historical boundaries of Southern Kurdistan**, a region inhabited since antiquity by the indigenous peoples of the Zagros highlands, whose cultural and linguistic continuity links directly to the early civilizations of Mesopotamia. By presenting the palace solely through an imperial lens, modern historiography erases the **local cultural geography** that shaped the political and artistic world of the Neo-Assyrian courts.

This selective framing transforms the palace reliefs into symbols of empire while concealing the **Kurdish landscape** upon which they were created. Such omissions exemplify a broader pattern of **archaeological and historiographical appropriation**, whereby the artifacts and monuments of ancient Kurdistan are detached from their true origins and subsumed into the narratives of occupying powers.

The **Palace of Nimrud**, therefore, is not merely an Assyrian royal complex—it is part of the broader **Zagros–Mesopotamian cultural continuum** that underpinned some of the earliest state formations in human history. Recognizing its **Kurdish–Zagros provenance** restores historical balance, situating Nimrud not at the periphery of

ancient civilization, but at its very heart—as a locus of artistic innovation and cross-cultural synthesis that profoundly influenced the development of early imperial art.



The Palace of Nimrud

6.20 – The Lamassu of Khorsawa

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Lamassu – Iraq, Nineveh Province, near Mosul, Khorsabad.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Lamassu – Southern Kurdistan, Nineveh Province, city of Nineveh, Khorsawa.

Date:

Neo-Assyrian Period, reign of Sargon II (721–705 BCE)

The monumental **Lamassu**—the winged bull or lion with a human head—stands among the most recognizable symbols of ancient Mesopotamian art and ideology. These colossal guardian figures once flanked the entrances of royal palaces and temples,

serving both architectural and theological purposes. The best-preserved examples were discovered at the **palace of Sargon II** in **Khorsawa** (modern Khorsabad), located within the historic heartland of **Southern Kurdistan**.

Carved from single monolithic blocks of stone, the Lamassu combined the strength of the bull, the agility of the eagle, and the intelligence of the human being, embodying divine protection, royal power, and cosmic order. Their imposing presence at the gates of the palace symbolized the **king's mandate from the gods** and his role as the protector of the realm.

During the late nineteenth century, **French and British archaeologists** excavated Khorsawa and removed numerous Lamassu sculptures from the site. These were subsequently transported to Europe and are now prominently displayed in institutions such as the **British Museum** in London and the **Louvre Museum** in Paris. In these museums, the Lamassu are labeled and exhibited solely as masterpieces of "Neo-Assyrian art," with no reference to their **Kurdish geographical and cultural provenance**.

However, the site of Khorsawa lies within the province of **Nineveh**, a region historically populated by **indigenous Kurdish communities** that trace their cultural continuity to the early civilizations of the Zagros. Archaeological and mythological evidence indicates that the region's religious festivals—most notably the earliest celebration of **Newroz**, the festival of renewal and fire—originated in this same cultural milieu, reflecting the spiritual heritage of ancient Kurdistan.

The **extraction and reclassification** of the Lamassu sculptures under non-Kurdish designations exemplify a long-standing pattern of **cultural dispossession and historical misrepresentation**. By erasing the Kurdish identity of Khorsawa from academic and museological discourse, occupying powers have sought to appropriate the material legacy of the Kurdish–Zagros civilizations within broader imperial narratives.

The **Lamassu of Khorsawa** thus stand not merely as artistic relics of Assyrian statecraft but as **silent witnesses to the suppression of Kurdish heritage**. Restoring their rightful context within the history of Kurdistan reclaims their dual significance—as both masterpieces of ancient sculpture and enduring symbols of a civilization whose memory has been deliberately obscured.

The Lamassu of Khorsawa

6.21 – The Statues of Gozan

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Statues of Tell Halaf – Syria, Hasakah Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Statues of Gozan – Western Kurdistan (Rojava), Hasakah Province, city of Hasakah, ancient Gozan.

Date:

10th–9th centuries BCE

The ancient site known today as **Tell Halaf** corresponds to the historical city of **Gozan**, capital of the **Aramean kingdom of Bit Bahiani**, one of the key early states of the Upper Mesopotamian region. Excavations conducted between **1911 and 1913** by the German archaeologist **Max von Oppenheim** revealed an extraordinary collection of **basalt statues, orthostats, and relief sculptures**, many of which once adorned the palace of **King Kapara**.

These artifacts, remarkable for their stylistic synthesis, blend **Aramean iconography** with the distinctive aesthetic traditions of the **Zagros–Kurdish highlands**, reflecting a fusion of local and regional artistic idioms. The figures—depicting mythological beings, protective deities, and ritual processions—embody a complex cultural dialogue between the highland and lowland civilizations that coexisted along the northern reaches of Mesopotamia.

Following their excavation, the majority of these sculptures were **transported to Germany**, where they were reassembled and are now displayed in the **Pergamon Museum** and the **Neues Museum** in Berlin. In museum catalogues and academic publications, they are consistently described under the generalized headings of *"Aramean art"* or *"North Mesopotamian culture."* However, there is **no acknowledgment** that Tell Halaf lies within the historical boundaries of **Western Kurdistan (Rojava)**, nor that its surrounding population has long been **predominantly Kurdish**.

This omission is not a matter of oversight but part of a broader **cultural and ethnographic assimilation**, wherein the indigenous context of major archaeological discoveries across Kurdistan is systematically omitted or replaced with neutral or state-approved terminologies. Such practices erase the **Kurdish geographical and civilizational presence** from the narrative of early Near Eastern history and perpetuate an academic framework in which the cultural agency of the Kurds is rendered invisible.

The sculptures of Gozan thus stand as more than relics of an ancient palace—they are **material witnesses to a lost cultural geography**, one in which the Kurdish–Zagros and Aramean worlds intersected and flourished. Recognizing their true provenance

repositions Gozan not as a peripheral site of “North Mesopotamia,” but as an integral center of **Kurdish–Aramean interaction**, technological advancement, and artistic innovation in the early Iron Age Near East.

The Statues of Gozan

6.22 – The Urartian Bronzes

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Urartian Bronzes – Turkey, Van Province, Toprakkale (ancient Rusahinili).

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Urartian Bronzes – Northern Kurdistan, Van Province, city of Wan (ancient Rusahinili).

Date:

8th–7th centuries BCE

The ancient **Urartian citadel of Toprakkale** (ancient *Rusahinili*) was one of the principal royal centers of the **Kingdom of Urartu**, strategically located in the heart of **Northern Kurdistan**, overlooking Lake Wan and the Zagros frontier. Excavations at this site have uncovered an exceptional assemblage of **Urartian bronze artifacts**, including shields, quivers, ceremonial weapons, relief plaques, ritual vessels, and fittings that once adorned royal furniture and temple architecture.

Renowned for their **technical sophistication and intricate design**, these bronzes depict mythological creatures, divine symbols, and royal iconography that encapsulate the ideological and artistic ethos of the Urartian state. The high degree of metallurgical craftsmanship demonstrates the **advanced technological and aesthetic achievements** of the highland civilizations that flourished across the Zagros–Ararat region during the early first millennium BCE.

A large number of these bronzes were removed from Kurdistan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are now dispersed among major European collections, particularly in the **British Museum** and various institutions across Germany, Austria, and France. In museum catalogues and academic references, these artifacts are typically described as originating from *"Urartu, Eastern Anatolia,"* a terminology that, while geographically misleading, serves to obscure the **Kurdish provenance** of the site.

The systematic omission of Kurdistan from such descriptions forms part of a broader **political and historiographical process** by which the cultural geography of the ancient Zagros region has been gradually redefined under modern state narratives. By classifying the artifacts as “Anatolian” or “Turkish,” both national and international institutions participate—whether knowingly or not—in the erasure of the indigenous Kurdish presence from the archaeological record of Northern Kurdistan.

The Urartian bronzes, however, stand as enduring material evidence of a **shared cultural continuum** that linked the mountain polities of the Zagros with those of the Armenian and Anatolian highlands. Far from being isolated relics, these artifacts attest to the **central role of the Kurdish–Zagros civilizations** in the evolution of metallurgy, art, and statecraft in the ancient Near East. Restoring the rightful Kurdish context of the Urartian bronzes not only reclaims historical truth but also reaffirms Kurdistan’s significance as one of the foundational centers of human creativity and technological innovation.

Urartian bronze quiver

Urartian bronze quiver

6.23 – The Ivory and Gold Artifacts of Zewa

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Ivory and Gold Artifacts of Ziwiye – Iran, Kurdistan Province, near Saqqez.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Ivory and Gold Artifacts of Zewa – Eastern Kurdistan, Sna (Sanandaj) Province, city of Saqqez.

Date:

7th century BCE

The **ivory and gold artifacts of Ziwiye** are among the most distinguished archaeological finds of the ancient Near East and are widely regarded as material reflections of the **Median cultural sphere**. Discovered near the modern city of Saqqez in **Eastern Kurdistan**, the Ziwiye assemblage comprises an extraordinary collection of **gold ornaments, ivory plaques, and finely crafted metalwork**, revealing the artistic and technical mastery of Iron Age societies in the Zagros region.

The designs of these artefacts—featuring intricate geometric patterns, animal motifs, and hybrid mythological creatures—embody a synthesis of both **indigenous Kurdish–Zagros artistic traditions** and external influences absorbed through long-distance cultural exchange. This artistic pluralism reflects the cosmopolitan nature of Median civilization and its role as a cultural bridge between Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Iranian plateau.

Despite the site's clear location within Kurdish geography and its close association with **Median-era craftsmanship**, modern Iranian scholarship routinely categorizes the Ziwiye collection under the broad and ambiguous labels of *"Iranian art," "Assyrian art,"* or *"Scythian art."* Such inconsistent attributions erase the local cultural identity of the region and reinforce a centralized Persian narrative that marginalizes the indigenous Kurdish contribution to early Near Eastern civilization.

Today, many of the Ziwiye artifacts are dispersed among major international institutions, including the **Louvre Museum** in Paris and the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York. In their official catalogues, these items are rarely described as products of Kurdish–Median culture. Instead, they are often reclassified as "Iranian,"

“Anatolian,” or “Mesopotamian,” with only fleeting or vague references to their true provenance.

This pattern of misattribution represents a deliberate **cultural and political distortion** that obscures the historical reality that Ziwiye lies at the heart of **Eastern Kurdistan**, a region that served as a major center of artistic innovation during the Iron Age. Acknowledging the Kurdish–Median context of Ziwiye restores not only geographical accuracy but also the rightful recognition of the **Kurdish people’s formative role** in shaping the aesthetic and technological foundations of the ancient Near East.

The Ziwiye collection thus stands as enduring testimony to the creative vitality of the Kurdish–Zagros world—a heritage that continues to challenge the imposed narratives of imperial historiography and reasserts Kurdistan’s place within the earliest chapters of human artistic expression.

Duck-spout vase, Zewa

The Golden Plaques of Winged Animals from Zewa

Gold vase with lions from Zewa

6.24 – The Golden Bowl of Darias

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Golden Bowl of Hasanlu – Iran, West Azerbaijan Province, Naqadeh District.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Golden Bowl of Darias – Eastern Kurdistan, Urmiya Province, city of Darias.

Date:

Late Iron Age, ca. 800 BCE

The **Golden Bowl of Darias**, unearthed from the archaeological mound of Darias, ranks among the most celebrated artefacts of the **Late Iron Age** in the ancient Near East. The bowl, crafted entirely of gold, exhibits a remarkable concentric design rich with mythological and ritual symbolism. Its intricate repoussé imagery has been interpreted by scholars as a reflection of both **cosmological mythology and natural philosophy**, embodying the technical sophistication and symbolic language of the early highland civilizations of Eastern Kurdistan.

Despite the fact that Darias lies within the **Urmiya region**, a historic Kurdish heartland, official Iranian archaeological and academic publications consistently label the find as originating from the *"northwestern region of Iran"* or *"northern Azerbaijan."* Such terminology deliberately detaches the artefact from its **Kurdish–Zagros cultural geography** and recasts it within the framework of Persian or Azeri heritage.

Today, the bowl is housed in the **National Museum of Iran** in Tehran, where it is prominently displayed as a masterpiece of "ancient Iranian art." However, the absence of any reference to its authentic provenance in **Eastern Kurdistan** reveals a persistent pattern of **political and historiographical appropriation**, aimed at erasing the indigenous Kurdish context of key archaeological discoveries.

From both an artistic and technological standpoint, the Golden Bowl of Darias attests to an advanced metallurgical tradition and a sophisticated symbolic system that predated the Achaemenid Empire by several centuries. The themes depicted—deities,

mythical creatures, and ritual processions—mirror the cultural synthesis of the **Median and Hurrian–Kurdish religious worldview**, emphasizing the cyclical relationship between humanity, nature, and divinity.

The systematic reclassification of the Darias bowl under non-Kurdish identities exemplifies a broader **political agenda** to redefine the geography of early civilizations in the Zagros region. Acknowledging its true Kurdish origin not only restores historical accuracy but also reaffirms the crucial role of **Eastern Kurdistan** as one of the earliest centers of artistic, technological, and spiritual innovation in the ancient world.

Gold bowl of Darias

Gold bowl of Darias

6.25 – The Ishtar Gate and the Processional Way

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Ishtar Gate and Processional Way – Iraq, Babylon Province.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Ishtar Gate and Processional Way – Southern Kurdistan, Babylon Province, city of Babylon.

In the **Kurdish language of the Median period**, the name *Ishtar* conveyed meanings of *faith, life, love,* and *womanhood*—reflecting a deeply spiritual and symbolic dimension associated with feminine divinity and renewal.

Date:

Reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, ca. 575 BCE

The **Ishtar Gate** and its adjoining **Processional Way** represent two of the most distinguished architectural achievements of ancient Babylon. Constructed from **glazed**

blue bricks adorned with reliefs of dragons (*mushḫuššu*) and bulls symbolizing divine and royal power, the gate served as a ceremonial entrance to the inner city and as a physical and spiritual monument dedicated to the goddess **Ishtar**—the embodiment of vitality, fertility, and love.

Architecturally, the complex illustrates the pinnacle of Neo-Babylonian monumental design: a synthesis of **aesthetic sophistication, religious symbolism, and imperial propaganda**. The luminous blue façade and the rhythmic alignment of animal motifs projected both the might of the empire and the sanctity of its divine protector. The Processional Way that extended beyond the gate formed part of the **sacred ceremonial route** for religious festivals such as the *Akitu*, linking the city's ritual life with its political and cosmic order.

During the **early twentieth century**, extensive German excavations at Babylon led by **Robert Koldewey** resulted in the removal of large sections of the gate and the Processional Way. These architectural elements were transported to Berlin, reconstructed, and are now prominently displayed in the **Pergamon Museum**, where they remain one of the institution's most famous exhibits.

However, the **official classification** of the monument exclusively as "Babylonian" or "Iraqi" art fails to recognize its **Kurdish–Mesopotamian geographical and cultural context**. The site of Babylon, situated within the historical boundaries of **Southern Kurdistan**, was part of a region inhabited by the indigenous peoples of the Zagros and Mesopotamian plains—communities whose cultural and linguistic heritage predated the Arab and later imperial presences by many centuries.

The **Ishtar Gate**, therefore, stands not only as a masterpiece of ancient architecture but also as a testament to a broader pattern of **cultural appropriation and historical misattribution**. Its relocation to Europe and continued display devoid of contextual acknowledgment exemplify how **Kurdish heritage has been systematically detached from its geographical and historical reality**. Recognizing the Kurdish–Zagros foundations of Babylon's civilization restores this monument to its rightful place within

the continuum of indigenous cultures that shaped the intellectual and artistic legacy of the ancient Near East.

Ishtar Gate reconstruction

6.26 – The Tablets of Nibor

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Tablets of Nippur – Iraq, Al-Qadisiyyah Province, ancient city of Nippur.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Tablets of Nibor – Southern Kurdistan, Nibor Province, city of Nibor.
In the Kurdish language of the Median period, *Nibor* signified "holy place" or "sacred city," reflecting its religious and spiritual importance within the region.

Date:

Sumerian period, ca. 3rd–2nd millennium BCE

The ancient city of **Nibor (Nippur)** was one of the primary **religious centers of ancient Mesopotamia**, serving as a focal point of worship and scholarship for millennia. Excavations conducted during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—most notably by the **University of Pennsylvania Expedition**—unearthed over **ten thousand cuneiform tablets** at the site. These tablets encompass a wide range of administrative, economic, literary, and theological texts that provide a crucial window into the intellectual and cultural life of early Mesopotamia.

Modern archaeological and museum records, however, consistently label these artefacts as **"Sumerian"** or **"Akkadian,"** and attribute the site to the modern state of Iraq, with **no acknowledgment of its Kurdish geographical and cultural context**. Yet historical evidence demonstrates that Nibor lay within the broader cultural and linguistic sphere of the **Zagros highlands**—an area inhabited by early Kurdish-related peoples such as the **Gutians, Lullubi, and Kassites**—whose influence shaped the development of early Mesopotamian civilization.

In later centuries, control of the city passed to the **Gutians** and other highland populations of the Zagros, reinforcing its role as a site of continual cultural exchange between the mountain and lowland civilizations. Nevertheless, museum displays and academic catalogues—particularly in institutions in the **United States and Europe**—continue to present these tablets within a narrow Sumerian or Akkadian framework,

effectively erasing the indigenous contributions of the Zagros peoples to the region's civilizational formation.

One of the most remarkable tablets discovered at Nibor contains an **early version of the Mesopotamian Flood Narrative**, a story that closely parallels later episodes found in both the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the **biblical account of Noah's Ark**. The text recounts a divine decision to destroy humanity through a great deluge, and the salvation of a righteous man, *Utnapishtim*, who constructs a large vessel to preserve his family and all living beings. This narrative, rooted in the cultural matrix of the Kurdish–Mesopotamian world, represents one of the earliest known expressions of humanity's moral and cosmological self-awareness.

Although scholars widely praise the Nibor tablets as masterpieces of ancient literature and statecraft, the site itself—and the civilization that produced these artefacts—remains absent from the broader history of Kurdish cultural heritage. The consistent failure to recognize their Kurdish–Zagros provenance exemplifies the **systematic marginalization** of Kurdistan's contribution to the origins of civilization and the **political reattribution** of its material heritage to surrounding empires and modern states.

Cuneiform tablet from Nibor

6.27 – The Slaying of the Zagros Lion

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Assyrian Lion Hunt Relief – Iraq, Mosul Region.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

The Slaying of the Zagros Lion by Assiran – Southern Kurdistan, Nineveh Province, city of Nineveh.

Date:

Neo-Assyrian Period, reign of Ashurbanipal (7th century BCE).

The renowned **lion-hunt reliefs** from the **palace of King Ashurbanipal** are among the most celebrated examples of Neo-Assyrian art, discovered in the mid-nineteenth

century within the ruins of ancient **Nineveh**, located in present-day Southern Kurdistan. These carved panels depict royal hunting scenes in which lions are released from cages to confront the Assyrian monarch, who slays them in ritualized combat. The imagery was intended to symbolize royal strength, divine favor, and dominion over nature—visual manifestations of the ideological foundations of Assyrian kingship.

Today, these reliefs are prominently displayed in the **British Museum**, where they are classified exclusively as masterpieces of "Neo-Assyrian art." Yet, the geographical and cultural context of Nineveh—situated within the historic heartland of the **Zagros–Kurdish civilization**—is conspicuously absent from official interpretation. During the time of their creation, the population of this region was composed largely of indigenous Zagros peoples, the ancestors of the modern Kurds, whose cultural and linguistic presence predated the Assyrian imperial expansion.

The official omission of this context is not accidental. By presenting these reliefs solely as "Assyrian," modern historiography effectively erases the **Kurdish geographical and civilizational identity** of the region, reducing it to a peripheral backdrop for imperial narratives. The **Slaying of the Zagros Lion**, as it may more accurately be called, is emblematic of the broader pattern of cultural and historical misattribution that has long characterized Western and regional scholarship on ancient Kurdistan.

From an artistic and symbolic standpoint, the reliefs do more than glorify royal sport; they encode a deeper political message of domination—of humankind over nature, and of empire over the indigenous peoples of the Zagros. The deliberate framing of the lion as a wild, untamed adversary parallels the ideological portrayal of highland populations as entities to be subdued, thereby transforming art into an instrument of political propaganda.

The continued display of these works without acknowledgment of their **Kurdish–Zagros provenance** perpetuates an enduring historical bias. Recognizing the reliefs as products of a complex, multi-ethnic environment—rather than as monolithic symbols of Assyrian civilization—restores a measure of historical accuracy. It situates the art of

Nineveh within the wider continuum of **Zagros highland culture**, which shaped much of Mesopotamia's religious and artistic imagination.

In this light, the "Assyrian Lion Hunt" reliefs stand not only as masterworks of ancient sculpture but also as silent witnesses to the long process of **cultural redefinition and erasure** that has obscured Kurdistan's role in the making of early Near Eastern civilization.

The Slaying of the Zagros Lion by Assiran

The Slaying of the Zagros Lion by Assiran

The Slaying of the Zagros Lion by Assiran

6.28 – The Cuneiform Tablet of Nineveh and the Epic of Gilgamesh

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:

Tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh – Iraq, Mosul region.

Authentic Kurdish Name and Location:

Tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh – Southern Kurdistan, Nineveh Province, city of Nineveh.

Date:

Neo-Assyrian period, 7th century BCE

Among the most significant discoveries in Near Eastern archaeology is the **cuneiform tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh**, excavated from the ruins of **ancient Nineveh**—a major urban center in Southern Kurdistan. The tablet was part of the **royal library of King Ashurbanipal** and contains portions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, widely regarded as the earliest known literary work in human history.

This tablet records the celebrated **Flood Narrative**, describing a cataclysmic deluge sent by the gods and the salvation of a righteous man, *Utnapishtim*, who constructs a great vessel to preserve his family and all living creatures. The parallels between this ancient Mesopotamian account and the biblical story of *Noah's Ark* have made it one of the most remarkable discoveries in comparative mythology and early literature.

When the text was first translated in **1872**, its striking resemblance to the Genesis narrative astonished scholars and captured worldwide attention, reshaping Western understanding of the origins of sacred storytelling and mythological archetypes. Subsequent excavations in the same region unearthed additional fragments of the Flood story, confirming its origins in the **ancient Kurdish–Mesopotamian cultural sphere** that predated Abrahamic traditions by over a millennium.

Despite its immense cultural and historical significance, museum displays and official catalogues—particularly in institutions such as the **British Museum**—rarely acknowledge that ancient Nineveh lies within the territory of **Southern Kurdistan**.

Instead, they present the find under the generalized heading of “Iraq” or “Assyria,” erasing the indigenous Kurdish context of the region.

It is essential to note that during the Neo-Assyrian period, the population of Nineveh and its surrounding settlements largely consisted of **indigenous Zagros peoples**, the ancestors of the modern Kurds. Historical and linguistic evidence indicates that **Newroz**, the ancient festival of fire and renewal, was first celebrated in this region, symbolizing both seasonal and spiritual rebirth—a tradition that has survived among the Kurds to the present day.

The **Tablet of Gilgamesh from Nineveh** thus embodies far more than an ancient literary text. It stands as tangible evidence of the intellectual and mythological heritage of the Kurdish–Mesopotamian world. The appropriation of its discovery under non-Kurdish designations exemplifies a broader pattern of **cultural and historiographical erasure**, wherein foundational elements of early human civilization—language, myth, and art—are detached from their original Kurdish context and subsumed into imperial or state-centered narratives.

Cuneiform Tablet from Nineveh and the Epic of Gilgamesh

Cuneiform Tablet from Nineveh and the Epic of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh meets Utnapishti, who tells him how he survived the great flood and was granted immortality by the Gods.

6.29 – The Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil

Attributed Name and Location by Occupying Authorities:
Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil – Iran, Khuzestan Province.

Authentic Kurdish–Elamite Name and Location:
Ziggurat (or Zigur) of Chogha Zanbil – Eastern Kurdistan, Khoristan Province, city of Susa (ancient Shush).

Date:
13th century BCE

The monumental Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil, erected by **King Untash-Napirisha** in the 13th century BCE near the ancient city of Susa, stands as one of the most imposing and best-preserved religious complexes of the ancient world. Constructed over a period of roughly two decades, it formed the sacred and administrative nucleus of an advanced **Elamite–Kurdish civilization** that flourished in the central Zagros region.

Architecturally, Chogha Zanbil represents a culmination of the **Elamite ziggurat tradition**, combining Mesopotamian step-tower form with distinct regional innovations. The structure consisted of five successively receding terraces, built of baked brick and inscribed with **Elamite cuneiform dedicatory texts**. These inscriptions identify the complex as a temple to the deity *Inshushinak*, the principal god of the Elamite pantheon, and attest to the existence of a highly organized priestly and political system operating in the Zagros heartlands long before the rise of the Persian Achaemenids.

Despite its unmistakably Elamite origin and its geographic location within the historic Kurdish cultural sphere, **modern Iranian historiography** persistently categorizes Chogha Zanbil as a monument of “Persian” heritage. Such reclassification erases the site’s authentic ethnic and linguistic context and substitutes a later imperial narrative for an earlier indigenous one. This practice exemplifies a broader **pattern of cultural and historiographical appropriation**, in which the material achievements of ancient Kurdish–Elamite societies are absorbed into a homogenized “Iranian” civilizational identity.

From an archaeological standpoint, Chogha Zanbil provides crucial evidence for the technological and theological sophistication of pre-Achaemenid Kurdistan. Its hydraulic engineering systems, ceremonial layout, and astronomical orientation reveal a deep understanding of environmental adaptation and sacred geometry characteristic of the Zagros highland cultures. Comparative analysis with contemporary Mesopotamian sites such as **Dur-Kurigalzu** and **Ur** demonstrates that while those monuments reflected imperial urban planning, Chogha Zanbil embodied a localized, highland tradition rooted in communal and cosmological continuity.

The continued misattribution of Chogha Zanbil to Persian heritage distorts both the chronological and cultural record. Recognizing its rightful **Elamite–Kurdish provenance** restores it to the continuum of indigenous civilizations that shaped the cultural and architectural foundations of the ancient Near East. As with many monuments across Kurdistan, this ziggurat stands not merely as an archaeological relic but as a **living testament** to an enduring cultural identity that predates and transcends the imperial narratives imposed upon it.

Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat

6.30 – Erasure and Appropriation of Kurdish Heritage: A Historical and Political Continuum

The systematic policies described in preceding sections were neither arbitrary nor spontaneous. Across the entire geography of Kurdistan—and far beyond its contemporary borders—the cultural and material heritage of the Kurdish people has been subject to deliberate misrepresentation, looting, and erasure. Within Kurdish territories, the ruling authorities of Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria have consistently appropriated Kurdish archaeological discoveries and cultural expressions, presenting them as components of their own national heritage while silencing any acknowledgment of their Kurdish origin.

In major international museums such as those in **London, Paris, Berlin, and New York**, artefacts unearthed in Kurdistan are routinely categorized under the banners of long-defunct empires — *Assyrian*, *Iranian*, *Syrian*, or *Mesopotamian*. These misclassifications, whether intentional or politically expedient, have obscured the authentic provenance of thousands of Kurdish artefacts and detached them from the living cultural continuum of the Kurdish people.

It is historically evident that the **Persians** first settled in the Iranian plateau roughly around the 10th century BCE; that the **Arabs** established themselves in Mesopotamia and the Levant only after the 7th century CE; and that the **Turks** arrived in Iran, Anatolia, and the broader Middle East between the 11th and 13th centuries CE. Yet, the material and architectural remains found across these lands predate those migrations by many centuries. Despite this chronological reality, both the occupying states and much of the global academic establishment have persistently credited these later groups as the rightful heirs to the ancient civilizations of the region — thereby erasing Kurdistan as the true cradle of many of these cultural achievements.

This systematic misappropriation of Kurdish heritage has served **two interrelated political purposes**:

1. **To exploit the grandeur of ancient Kurdish civilizations**—such as the Medes, Hurrians, and Mitanni—to reinforce the territorial and ideological legitimacy of Persian, Arab, and Turkic state narratives.
2. **To exclude the Kurds from a coherent and continuous historical identity**, thereby weakening their capacity to assert cultural and political rights in the modern era.

The consequence has been the creation of a fractured and distorted archaeological record in which Kurdish descendants are largely denied access to their ancestral monuments and treasures. Many are prevented, both administratively and politically, from conducting research, preservation, or cultural revival efforts that would affirm their rightful ownership of these artefacts as expressions of Kurdish civilization.

The known examples of such reattribution represent only a fraction of the total Kurdish archaeological record. Numerous other sites remain undocumented or intentionally unlisted. Many artefacts have been catalogued under foreign designations or assigned to unrelated cultures—Persian, Arab, Turkic, or Azeri—to obstruct any Kurdish claim to them. This deliberate practice has enabled occupying powers to construct their own fabricated historical continuity and to justify modern political control over territories that were once indisputably Kurdish.

In many instances, **erasure has occurred both physically and conceptually**. Countless Kurdish artefacts have been stolen, melted down, smuggled, or destroyed. Ancient goldwork, for example, has often been recast and rebranded as the royal treasure of Persian or other imperial dynasties, thereby obliterating the physical and symbolic evidence of Kurdish craftsmanship. Such acts are not mere violations of international cultural heritage standards; they represent deliberate attempts to eliminate Kurdish identity from the historical and archaeological landscape.

This behavior reflects a deeper historical anxiety among occupying states — the desire to construct their own national pasts by appropriating the heritage of the Kurds. For the Kurdish people, however, **heritage reclamation** is not confined to the physical recovery

of artefacts. It is the restoration of historical truth, the safeguarding of cultural continuity, and the defense of their right to narrate their own history.

The preservation of Kurdish heritage must therefore operate on two complementary levels:

- **Academic and institutional**, through documentation, research, and international recognition of Kurdish provenance; and
- **Cultural and communal**, through the active transmission of Kurdish oral traditions, craftsmanship, and collective memory that sustain this heritage as a living reality.

Ultimately, reclaiming Kurdish cultural heritage is not merely a matter of archaeology. It is an act of resistance against centuries of dispossession — a reaffirmation that the monuments, languages, and artistic achievements of the Zagros are not relics of lost empires, but enduring testaments to a civilization that continues to live, adapt, and remember.

6.31 – Erased Names and Stolen Heritage: Cultural and Historical Reattribution of Kurdish Identity

The history of Kurdistan is not simply the record of peoples who lived in the heart of the Zagros Mountains; it is also the testimony of a continuous and deliberate process of erasure. Kurdish civilization, deeply rooted in the highlands of the Zagros, has endured systematic plunder, renaming, and reattribution from antiquity to the present day. The appropriation of Kurdish heritage has not been a coincidence of history but a calculated political and cultural strategy—intended to control the Kurdish homeland, its natural wealth, and its historical narrative.

The **Median Empire**, founded by King Deioces (Diyako) in the late 8th century BCE, represents the earliest recorded state linked to the Kurdish ancestral lineage. The Medes ruled a vast territory extending from the Zagros Mountains to the Anatolian

plateau and established one of the earliest systems of governance and urban organization in the ancient world. Yet in much of modern historiography, this empire is often depicted merely as a "prelude" to the Persian Empire. This view disregards the fact that the migration of Persian-speaking peoples from Central Asia into the Iranian plateau occurred centuries after the Medes had already formed advanced political institutions and a distinct cultural-linguistic identity. Nevertheless, dominant narratives have persistently credited the Persians as the region's first civilizers, thereby obscuring the Kurdish foundation upon which much of that civilization was built.

This **pattern of cultural reattribution** persisted into later centuries. The **Sasanian Empire** (224–651 CE), which drew its power and wealth from the manpower, strategic geography, and resources of the Zagros highlands, is almost universally described as "Persian." In reality, a considerable number of Sasanian noble families and military contingents were of Kurdish origin. Despite this, official records and museum catalogues continue to attribute monuments, inscriptions, and archaeological artefacts from Kurdish regions to "Persian" or "Assyrian" sources, excluding Kurdish identity from the historical frame.

Even the most iconic figure in Kurdish collective memory—**Kawa the Blacksmith (Kawa Asingar)**—has undergone deliberate distortion. Around 700 BCE, Kawa led a mass uprising that overthrew a brutal ruler, a historic act of liberation celebrated to this day as *Newroz*, the festival of renewal. Persian historiography, particularly Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, transformed Kawa into a purely mythical character within a Persian legend, erasing the historical substance of his leadership and national symbolism. This reinterpretation was not a neutral literary adaptation but an intentional act of cultural displacement—absorbing Kurdish myths into Persian national ideology.

The same logic of **appropriation through renaming** extends even into the natural world. The **Zagros Leopard**, known among Kurds as *Plingi Tinu* ("the Thirsty Leopard"), once roamed the forests and foothills of Kurdistan. In Kurdish folklore, it symbolized strength, endurance, and the unyielding spirit of the mountains. Yet international zoological records refer to it as the "Persian Leopard," detaching it from its indigenous

context. Such linguistic shifts are not trivial; they reinforce state-centric narratives that claim ownership of regional heritage and erase Kurdish cultural markers.

Kurdish **material and intangible culture** has been similarly absorbed and rebranded. When the Ottoman military entered Sulaymaniyah in Southern Kurdistan, they encountered the **Garmawi** hot-bath tradition, which they transported to Istanbul, renamed, and globalized as the "Turkish Hamam." The same process occurred in the culinary sphere: **Kurdish kebab** became "Turkish kebab," the fermented yogurt drink **Do** was renamed "Ayran," and numerous Kurdish-origin foods—such as cheeses, dairy products, and bread varieties—are marketed globally under Turkish or Persian names.

The art of **Kurdish carpet weaving**, characterized by its distinctive regional patterns and symbolic motifs, has suffered the same fate. These textiles are internationally sold as "Persian carpets," with their authentic origins intentionally concealed. Agricultural innovations born in the Zagros—ranging from irrigation systems to cultivation techniques—are attributed to foreign cultures. Even Kurdish music, songs, and instruments have been reclassified as Turkish, Azeri, or Persian, demonstrating the extent of linguistic and cultural assimilation.

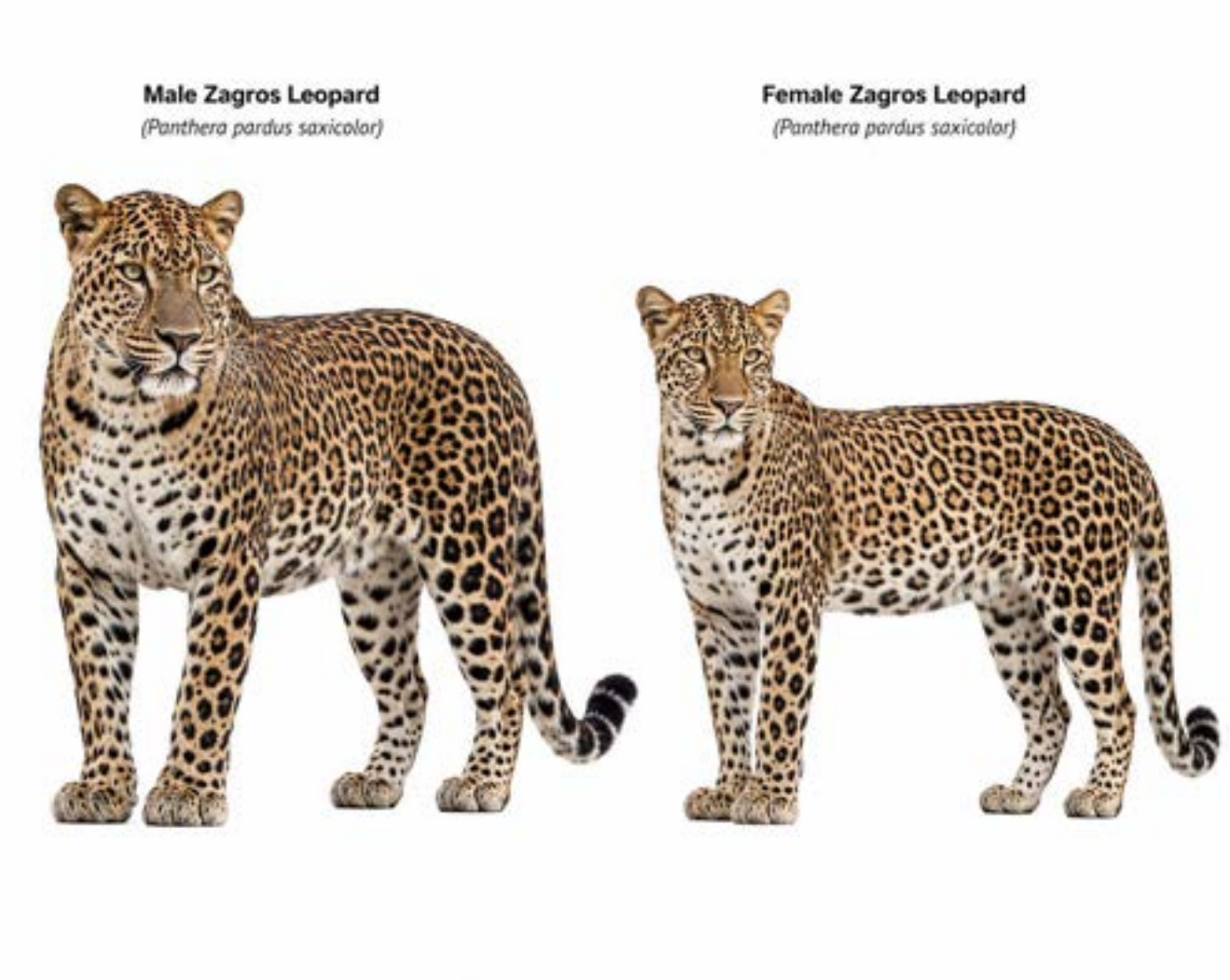
One of the most pervasive tools of cultural erasure has been **the systematic renaming of geography**. Ancient Kurdish and Median cities such as **Zangiyan (Zanjan)**, **Qazwan (Qazvin)**, **Tawrez (Tabriz)**, **Ardewil (Ardabil)**, **Ecbatan (Hamadan)**, **Anshan (Shiraz)**, **Tisfun (Baghdad)**, **Ninewa (Mosul)**, **Alapo (Aleppo)**, and **Antakiya (Hatay)** have all undergone deliberate renaming to align with Persian, Turkish, or Arabic linguistic forms. Over generations, such practices detached Kurdistan's geography from its original historical and cultural context, replacing it with external identities imposed by successive occupying powers.

This process is not limited to the realm of nomenclature. It reshapes historical consciousness and influences how the world perceives the Kurdish role in human civilization. When ancient Kurdish rulers are mislabeled as Persian, when indigenous fauna and artefacts are renamed after foreign states, and when Kurdish inscriptions are

catalogued as “anonymous,” the underlying message is systematic: to erase the Kurds from the historical and cultural narrative of their own land.

Yet despite centuries of suppression, the land itself continues to bear witness. The ruins of Median fortresses stand resilient across the mountains; the carved stones of ancient cities display inscriptions predating Persian, Arab, and Turkic influence; and Kurdish oral traditions preserve the names and achievements of their ancestors even when written sources remain silent. The *Plingi Tinu* may no longer roam the Zagros, but it survives in the collective memory of the Kurds—a living symbol of endurance that no empire could fully erase.

The **reclamation of Kurdish history** is therefore not merely an academic enterprise. It is an act of cultural preservation and political affirmation. Restoring the authentic names of places, recognizing the indigenous creators of monuments, and reviving the genuine identity of Kurdish art, cuisine, and music are essential steps toward dismantling centuries of imposed falsification. As long as Kurdish history continues to be told through the language of its conquerors, the Kurds will remain misrepresented. But in reclaiming their own voice, they reveal a truth as enduring as the mountains themselves and as timeless as the rivers that flow through them.



The Zagros Leopard, known in Kurdish as «Pilingê Tînoo», is regarded as one of the largest and most powerful subspecies of the Asian leopard. In Kurdish indigenous tradition, the name «Tînoo» (Thirsty) is attributed to this animal because it is frequently observed near river springs and in the humid mountainous regions of the Zagros Mountains.

An adult male usually weighs 50–70 kg (with exceptionally large males reaching 90–100 kg) and measures 2.0–2.8 metres in total length, including the tail. An adult female usually weighs 35–50 kg (occasionally up to 60 kg) and measures 1.8–2.4 metres in total length, including the tail. In the wild, Zagros leopards typically live 10–15 years, while in captivity they can live 20–23 years with good care.

Conclusion

Throughout history, the Kurdish people have tragically missed numerous opportunities to establish a unified and independent state. Time and again, internal divisions and the lack of national cohesion have left them vulnerable to domination and exploitation by external powers. The greatest setbacks have not always been inflicted by foreign occupiers but have often emerged from within—through the failure of Kurdish leaders, tribes, and factions to unite under a shared national cause.

As a consequence, Kurdistan's abundant natural wealth—its fertile lands, vast resources, and flowing rivers—has been systematically plundered for centuries by occupying regimes. While Kurdish blood was shed, and Kurdish homes destroyed, the true beneficiaries of this exploitation have been the enemies of Kurdistan. The vision of a free and united Greater Kurdistan has been repeatedly deferred, its lands looted, and its people left stateless, voiceless, and impoverished—even into the 21st century.

At no point in modern history have all Kurds—or even a majority of Kurdish leadership—stood together in a cohesive resistance against occupation. While many have resisted valiantly, others have remained passive, and some have tragically aligned themselves with the oppressors. These internal betrayals have fueled the erosion of Kurdish sovereignty and dignity. The wealth extracted from Kurdish lands—its oil, gas, water, minerals, and agricultural yields—has enriched foreign regimes, who in turn have used these very resources to deepen Kurdish subjugation.

Even more painful is the reality that many Kurds today take pride in identities imposed upon them. Generations of assimilation into Turkish, Persian, Arab, or Azeri cultures have severed millions from their Kurdish heritage. More than half of the Kurdish

population now lives under occupation, and many, knowingly or unknowingly, act against the interests of their own nation.

Despite advancements in technology and a global awakening to human rights, the campaign of cultural erasure and forced assimilation continues. Large segments of the Kurdish population have been indoctrinated—either through coercion or cultural manipulation—to reject their roots. In Turkey, for instance, though over 80% of the population is ethnically Kurdish, fewer than 20% openly identify as such. Many now self-identify as ultra-nationalist Turks, some even harboring hostility toward their own Kurdish ancestry. They refuse to acknowledge that their identities have been shaped through systematic Turkification, suppression, and historical denial.

This tragic process of identity erasure has persisted for over 3,000 years, across regions now known as Turkmenistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. In cities like Zangiyan (Zanjan), Tawrez (Tabriz), Ardewel (Ardabil), and Rebar (Rasht) , Kurds have been Azerified. In Hamadan, Shiraz, and Bushehr, they have been Persianized. In Baghdad, Mosul, Raqqa, and Aleppo, they have been Arabized. In many of these areas, ethnic Kurds make up the majority, yet only a small fraction retain awareness of their true origins. The rest, deeply assimilated, now identify as Turks, Arabs, or Persians. (See Appendix 8.)

Religious ideologies, particularly Sunni and Shiite Islam, have also been weaponized by occupying regimes to divide and weaken the Kurdish nation. Twelver Shiism, founded by the Kurdish mystic Sheikh Safi al-Din of Ardewel (Ardabil) in the 16th century, gave rise to the Safavid dynasty—Kurdish rulers who, ironically, turned against their own people. Under Safavid rule, Kurdish identity was suppressed, the Kurdish language banned, and Persian and Azeri identities forcibly imposed upon Kurdish lands.

In Northern Kurdistan—regions such as Hatay and Osmaniye—the Kurdish language was officially banned until 1991, while Turkish was enforced as mandatory. Although the vast majority of Anatolia's population is of Kurdish origin, generations of state-led indoctrination have led most to now identify as Turkish, distancing themselves from their own Kurdish heritage.

This internalized oppression has become deeply embedded in personal identity. Entire generations have been raised to view Kurdishness as a stigma to be concealed or rejected. Even the original names of Kurdish cities, towns, rivers, and mountains have been erased from official records and collective memory. (See Appendix 9.)

Yet, how can a nation be denied its existence when its land bears some of the earliest traces of human civilization? How can a people be erased when their homeland includes the mountain believed to be the resting place of Noah’s Ark, and the tomb of Prophet Noah himself? A nation rooted in such sacred geography must not be forgotten or erased. (See Appendix 10.)

Moreover, how can a people with shared social, cultural, linguistic, and political systems that have endured for millennia be said to lack identity? The Kurdish people—among the most ancient and resilient in the Middle East—have preserved their civilizational continuity through oral traditions, collective memory, and historical consciousness. A people that has maintained systems of governance, justice, community, and language for thousands of years cannot be dismissed as stateless or rootless. (See Appendix 11.)

This is not merely an academic concern—it is a moral imperative. The peoples of the region, especially those who have been forcibly assimilated, must awaken to their true heritage. They must reject racism, ethnonationalism, and historical denial in all forms. The revival of Kurdish identity is not a call for superiority; it is a call for dignity, truth, and justice.

Those who now identify as Turks, Azeris, Arabs, or Persians must come to terms with the reality that many of their ancestors were once Kurds—transformed over generations through systemic erasure. In a world where freedom of identity is a fundamental human right, the forced suppression of language, ethnicity, and culture can no longer be tolerated. Recognizing that many contemporary Turks, Persians, and Arabs in the region have Kurdish roots is not an act of division—it is an act of healing.

There is no requirement for anyone to abandon their current language or culture. What matters is the rejection of racism and historical hostility toward Kurds, and the embrace of respect, coexistence, and shared humanity. A peaceful and cooperative future, rooted in mutual recognition and dignity, is not only possible—it is essential.

Kurds living in southern regions of Greater Kurdistan—such as Ekbatan (Hamadan), Malamir (Malayer), Borujerd, Khorawa (Khorramabad), Shahr-e-Kurd, Susa (Shushtar), Anshan (Shiraz), Ray Shahr (Bushehr), and Yazd-e-Kurd—must recognize that they are part of the broader Kurdish homeland. They must embrace their Elamite-Kurdish heritage and reject the racism that has alienated them from their roots. Their future lies in unity and solidarity with the greater Kurdish nation and with all the peoples of the region.

Similarly, Persian-speaking Tajiks in Iran must remember that nearly 3,000 years ago, their ancestors migrated into Kurdish lands from Central Asia. Their language, culture, and civilization were shaped within the Kurdish milieu. As neighbors, they should honor this shared history with respect, not with denial or chauvinism.

The same applies to Kurds who have been Arabized in Khuzestan, Salahaddin, Nineveh, Raqqa, Baghdad, Basra, and Aleppo. Many of them, having been assimilated across generations, now stand in opposition to their Kurdish identity and heritage. But this is no longer the age of tribal supremacy and racial ideologies. We live in an era of coexistence, global consciousness, and shared human values.

For these individuals, rediscovering their Kurdish identity is not a step backward. It is a leap forward toward truth, dignity, and coexistence. There is no need for them to abandon their current language or culture. What matters is rejecting historical hostilities and embracing solidarity, equality, and mutual respect.

Only by confronting the truths of the past and striving for a shared future can the peoples of this region—Kurdish and non-Kurdish alike—build a just, free, and humane society.

As a final statement, it must be firmly declared: the time has come for the United Nations to officially recognize the Kurdish people's right to representation within its institutions. The flag of Kurdistan must be raised alongside those of other nations. The map of Kurdistan must be officially documented in global and digital atlases. Above all, the Kurdish nation must be acknowledged as a sovereign and independent state.

At this defining moment in history, the conscience of the world can no longer remain silent in the face of the systematic denial of the basic rights of more than 80 million Kurds. Recognition, justice, and dignity are not optional; they are moral imperatives.

Until the identity of an independent and sovereign Kurdistan is formally recognized, not only will Turkish, Persian, and Arab states remain uneasy and unsettled, but the broader region—and indeed the global community—will continue to lack true peace, stability, and justice.

Only with such recognition can humanity begin to atone for the enduring injustice and historical denial inflicted upon the Kurdish people.

Appendix 1

1	History of Mitanni Kingdom https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitanni
2	History of Lullubi Kingdom https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lullubi
3	History of Gutian people https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gutian_people

1. Hurrians (c. 3000–1200 BC)

- Location: The Hurrians lived in areas now part of modern–day Kurdistan, particularly in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Rise to Power:
    - The Hurrians played an important role in the early history of the ancient Near East. They were contemporary with the Akkadian Empire and were known for their cultural influence.
    - Around 1500 BC, the Mitanni Kingdom, a Hurrian–speaking kingdom, emerged as a major power in the region, especially in northeastern Syria, southern Turkey, and parts of Mesopotamia.
- Major Historical Event:
    - The Mitanni Kingdom was one of the significant states of the Middle Bronze Age, often in conflict with the Hittites, Egyptians, and Assyrians.
    - It was known for its powerful rulers, such as Tushratta, and had a strong influence on the region's politics. The Hurrians also played a key role in spreading the use of horses in chariot warfare.

Decline and Fall:

    - By the 12th century BC, the Mitanni Kingdom collapsed due to the combined pressures from the Hittites, Assyrians, and other neighboring powers.
    - The Hurrians as a distinct group faded, but their influence persisted in the culture of their conquerors, especially in the Assyrian Empire.
- Legacy:
    - While the Hurrians disappeared as a distinct people, their contributions to the cultural and political landscapes of the ancient Near East were significant. Their language influenced the Assyrian and Aramean peoples.

2. Lullubi (c. 2300–2200 BC)

- Location: The Lullubi were an ancient people living in the Zagros Mountains, covering parts of modern–day northern Iraq and western Iran.
- Rise to Power:
    - The Lullubi people were contemporaneous with the Akkadian Empire and played a key role in the interactions between mountain peoples and the Mesopotamian civilizations.
    - They resisted the early Akkadian king Sargon of Akkad around 2300 BC but were eventually defeated by the Akkadian forces.
- Major Historical Event:
    - In the mid–23rd century BC, Sargon of Akkad invaded Lullubi territory, marking their defeat and eventual absorption into the Akkadian Empire.
- Decline and Fall:
    - After the fall of the Akkadian Empire around 2200 BC, the Lullubi likely fell under control of the Gutians (who briefly ruled Mesopotamia) or the Sumerians.
    - The region came under the control of the Assyrians in later centuries.
- Legacy:
    - The Lullubi, after their integration into larger empires, contributed culturally to the development of the Medes and Persians. Their legacy is

especially tied to the ethnic and cultural development of the Kurdish people.

3. Gutians (c. 2200–2100 BC)

- Location: The Gutians originated in the Zagros Mountains, in areas now part of modern Kurdistan (northern Iraq and Iran). They were known to have invaded and briefly ruled parts of Mesopotamia, including Akkad and Sumer.
- Rise to Power:
    - Around 2200 BC, the Gutians overthrew the Akkadian Empire, which had weakened due to internal conflict and external pressure. They briefly ruled over Sumer and Akkad.
    - The Gutians were often depicted as barbaric invaders by later sources, but they likely had their own cultural and political systems.
- Major Historical Event:
    - The Gutians are said to have sacked the Akkadian capital of Akkad, bringing an end to the Akkadian Empire around 2200 BC.
    - The Gutians' rule in Mesopotamia was marked by political instability, and they were seen as disruptors of the region's prosperity.
- Decline and Fall:
    - Around 2100 BC, the Sumerian king Ur–Nammu, of the Ur III Dynasty, expelled the Gutians from Sumer and Akkad, restoring Sumerian control over the region.
    - After their defeat, the Gutians retreated to the Zagros Mountains. It is believed that they eventually merged with other groups in the region, contributing to the rise of the Medes and Kurds.
- Legacy:
    - The Gutians left little trace of their own culture, but their brief rule contributed to the dynamics of Mesopotamian history. Some of their descendants likely formed part of the Medes and Persians.

Chronological Order of Events:

1. Hurrians (c. 3000–1200 BC)
    - Rise of the Mitanni Kingdom (1500–1300 BC).
    - Influence over Mesopotamian politics and eventual absorption by the Assyrians in the 12th century BC.
2. Lullubi (c. 2300–2200 BC)
    - Resisted Sargon of Akkad around 2300 BC.
    - Absorbed into the Akkadian Empire after their defeat.
    - Likely integrated into Sumerian or Assyrian rule after the fall of Akkad.
3. Gutians (c. 2200–2100 BC)
    - Overthrew the Akkadian Empire around 2200 BC.
    - Brief rule over Akkad and Sumer.
    - Expelled by Ur–Nammu around 2100 BC and retreated to the Zagros Mountains.

Appendix 2

1	The Sassanids were Kurds not Persians https://www.kurdia.net/archives/5141?utm_source=chatgpt.com
2	the origins of the Kurds—myths, history, and modern politics https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.7560/309117-003/html?srsltid=AfmBOor1JHRwlOWVfu7TomMWM91DE-rA-Ovr-Z3hVM-4PCFutLrCYuM-&utm_source=chatgpt.com
3	The Origins and Appearance of the Kurds in https://www.academia.edu/98763429/The_Origins_and_Appearance_of_the_Kurds_in?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The Kurdish Origins of the Sassanid Dynasty: A Reexamination of Historical Evidence

Throughout history, the Sassanid Empire (224–651 AD) has been predominantly identified as a Persian dynasty. However, a closer examination of historical sources reveals compelling evidence supporting the Kurdish origins of the Sassanids. Contrary to traditional historical narratives, a wealth of documentation indicates that the Sassanids were of Kurdish descent. This article presents and analyzes various historical sources that substantiate this claim.

1. The Ancestry of Sasan and the Kurdish Connection

Sasan, the progenitor of the Sassanid dynasty, is believed to have originated from Kurdistan. Historical records indicate that he fled to Persia after a prophecy foretold that his descendants would rule Ariana. Notably, Sasan was not of Persian origin but instead traced his lineage to Bahman, son of Esfandyar, and the Kiani king Goshtasp. He was known to be a camel herder under a feudal lord. Furthermore, Dehkhoda's encyclopedia states that Ardashir's father, Papak, was a Kurdish shepherd.

Dr. Rashid Yasemi, a professor at the University of Tehran, asserts that Sasan belonged to the Kurdish Shwankara clan. Additionally, Papak's mother was from the Kurdish

Bazrangi clan, whose homeland was in the Kurdish region of Fars Province. These details affirm that Ardashir I, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, had Kurdish ancestry.

2. The Testimony of Ardavan IV and Parthian Sources

The Parthian king Ardavan IV, in his correspondence with Ardashir I, explicitly referred to him as a Kurd. Historical records preserved by Al–Tabari and Ibn al–Athir document a letter from Ardavan IV, in which he ridiculed Ardashir, stating: "You, Kurdish man who was raised in Kurdish tents, who authorized you to wear a crown?" This statement is a significant indication of Ardashir's Kurdish origins.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Bahram Chopin, the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan during the Sassanid era, who insulted Khosrau II by calling him the "son of an adulteress raised in Kurdish tents." This further suggests that the Sassanid rulers were identified as Kurds even by their contemporaries.

3. The Kurdish Roots of the Shwankara Clan

The Shwankara clan, from which Sasan descended, later established a Kurdish emirate during the late Buyid dynasty. The historical record compiled by Eduard Karl Max von Zambauer identifies the Shwankara tribe as direct descendants of Ardashir Papak. This lineage further reinforces the notion that the Sassanids were of Kurdish origin.

4. The Kurdish Districts in Sassanid Cities

Several cities built by the Sassanids bore Kurdish names. The capital city of Mada'in included a district called "Kurdabad," meaning "A district built by the Kurds." The historical text The Dictionary of Countries by Yaqut al–Hamawi affirms this fact. Additionally, Ardashir I founded a city named "Buth Ardashir" near present–day Mosul for the Kurds.

Furthermore, Sassanid kings such as Qubad and Anushirwan built over thirty cities in Aran, including Malazkurd, whose name clearly denotes a Kurdish origin.

5. Linguistic and Cultural Evidence

The term "Khosrau," used by the Sassanid rulers, is derived from two Kurdish words: "khas" (good) and "rau" (conduct). This suggests that the title of Sassanid kings had Kurdish linguistic roots. Unlike Persian, which lacks these words, Kurdish retains these meanings, reinforcing the claim that the Sassanids were of Kurdish descent.

Additionally, many Sassanid names bear Kurdish etymological connections. For instance:

- Yazdkurd combines "Yazd" (a deity reference) with "Kurd."
- Ardashir is derived from "Arda" (good) and "Sher" (lion), both words of Median–Kurdish origin.
- Fairooz or Peeroz means "blessed" in Kurdish.
- Hormizd is linked to the Sumerian deity Hormes, later adapted as Ahura Mazda.

These linguistic traces further highlight the Kurdish identity of the Sassanid rulers.

6. The Kurdish Influence on Sassanid Resistance

During the Arab–Islamic conquest, resistance against the invaders was primarily concentrated in Kurdish strongholds such as Sharazur, Mosul, Helwan, Nahavand, and Jalawla. The fierce defense of the Sassanid state in these areas underscores the strong Kurdish support for the dynasty, further indicating that the Sassanids were perceived as a Kurdish ruling house.

7. The Flag of Kawa and Sassanid Symbolism

The Sassanid imperial flag, known as the Kawyan Banner, was named after the Kurdish blacksmith Kawa, a legendary figure in Kurdish folklore. The reverence for Kawa among the Sassanids suggests a strong cultural affiliation with Kurdish identity.

8. Historical Testimonies of Nestorian and Other Scholars

A Nestorian Syrian historical text, The Little History, identifies the Sassanid general Hormazdān, cousin of Yazdkurd III and grandson of Ardashir Papak, as a descendant of the Median Kurds. Similarly, historian Parvaneh Pourshariati notes that Hormazdān was

a resident of Media, further linking the Sassanids to the Medes, the ancestors of the Kurds.

9. The Sassanids and the Kurdish Language

Medieval scholar Masoud Muhammad asserts that the Kurdish Hawrami dialect is identical to the Pahlavi language, which was spoken by the Sassanids. He references The Lexicon in Measures of Non–Arabic Poetry, which praises both the Hawramani melody and Pahlavi verses, illustrating the linguistic continuity between the Sassanids and the Kurds.

10. The Fathlawi Dynasty and the Shwankara Kurdish Emirate

The Fathlawi family, ruling from 1155 to 1432 AD, belonged to the Kurdish Shwankara tribe and claimed descent from the Sassanid kings. The establishment of the Atabak of Shwankara Kurds in Persia during the Buyid period further substantiates the Kurdish heritage of the Sassanid dynasty.

The overwhelming historical, linguistic, and cultural evidence presented in this study strongly supports the assertion that the Sassanid dynasty was of Kurdish origin. The direct references by contemporaries, the linguistic structure of royal titles, the geographical and cultural footprints, and the resistance against Arab conquest all point to a Kurdish heritage for the Sassanid rulers.

This reevaluation challenges the traditional Persian–centric perspective on Sassanid history and calls for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to understanding the ethnic identity of one of the most significant dynasties of antiquity.

Here's a list of Sassanid kings mentioned in your text, along with their reign years, areas ruled, capitals, and languages used:

1. Ardashir I (r. 224–242 AD)
    - Ruled: Sassanid Empire (Kurdistan, Iran, Mesopotamia, parts of Central Asia)

- Capital: Ctesiphon (current name Al–Mada'in)
- Language: Kurdish

2. Khosrau II (r. 590–628 AD)
    - Ruled: Sassanid Empire
    - Capital: Ctesiphon
    - Language: Kurdish
3. Yazdkurd III (r. 632–651 AD)
    - Ruled: Sassanid Empire (last Sassanid ruler)
    - Capital: Ctesiphon
    - Language: Kurdish
4. Qubad I (r. 488–531 AD)
    - Ruled: Sassanid Empire
    - Capital: Ctesiphon
    - Language: Kurdish
5. Anushirwan (Khosrau I) (r. 531–579 AD)
    - Ruled: Sassanid Empire
    - Capital: Ctesiphon
    - Language: Kurdish
6. Hormazdān (General, related to Yazdkurd III)
    - Role: Sassanid general, governor of Media
    - Ruled: Not a king but an influential Sassanid noble
    - Language: Kurdish
7. Here is a list of the Sassanian kings, their reign periods, and their capital cities:

King Name	**Reign (AD)**	**Capital City**
Ardashir I	224–242	Ctesiphon
Shapur I	242–270	Ctesiphon
Hormizd I	270–271	Ctesiphon
Bahram I	271–274	Ctesiphon
Bahram II	274–293	Ctesiphon

King Name	Reign (AD)	Capital City
Bahram III	293	Ctesiphon
Narseh	293–302	Ctesiphon
Hormizd II	302–309	Ctesiphon
Shapur II	309–379	Ctesiphon
Ardashir II	379–383	Ctesiphon
Shapur III	383–388	Ctesiphon
Bahram IV	388–399	Ctesiphon
Yazdegerd I	399–420	Ctesiphon
Bahram V (Gor)	420–438	Ctesiphon
Yazdegerd II	438–457	Ctesiphon
Hormizd III	457–459	Ctesiphon
Peroz I	459–484	Ctesiphon
Balash	484–488	Ctesiphon
Kavadh I (1st reign)	488–496	Ctesiphon
Djamasp	496–498	Ctesiphon
Kavadh I (2nd reign)	498–531	Ctesiphon
Khosrow I (Anushirvan)	531–579	Ctesiphon
Hormizd IV	579–590	Ctesiphon
Khosrow II (Parviz)	590, 591–628	Ctesiphon
Kavad II	628	Ctesiphon
Ardashir III	628–630	Ctesiphon
Shahrbaraz	630	Ctesiphon
Boran	630–631	Ctesiphon
Shapur V	631	Ctesiphon

King Name	Reign (AD)	Capital City
Azarmidokht	631	Ctesiphon
Hormizd VI	631–632	Ctesiphon
Yazdegerd III	632–651	Ctesiphon (later moved due to Rashidum Caliphate Arab invasion to Hilwan near Kirmashan, then moved to Istakhir near Perspolis). Yazdegerd III was killed after he was betrayed when refuge to Merv (in modern Turkmenistan)

Appendix 3

1	Khurshadi dynasty https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khorshidi_dynasty?utm_source=chatgpt.com
2	Safavid Lorestan https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavid_Lorestan?utm_source=chatgpt.com
3	Khurshadi dynasty https://en.wikipedia–on-ipfs.org/wiki/Khorshidi_dynasty?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The Khurshadi Dynasty ruled primarily from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The dates I initially mentioned earlier (1184–1598) are more accurate for their rule. The other dates you mentioned (1050–1250) might have been mistakenly referenced or confused with another dynasty or time period.

Here's a more precise breakdown of the Khurshadi Dynasty's rule:

Khurshadi Dynasty Timeline:

- Period: The Khurshadi Dynasty ruled from 1184 to 1598.
- Capital: The capital was Shiraz (in Fars).

List of Rulers of the Khurshadi Dynasty (1184–1598):

Ruler Name	**Reign Period**	**Key Areas Controlled**	**Capital**	**Fate**
Ata (Pasha) Begi Luri	1184–1211	Fars, Khuzestan, parts of southern Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Shujaddin Khorshadi	1211–1230	Shiraz, Fars, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Badreddin Masoud	1230–1250	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Luristan	Shiraz	Died or overthrown

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Key Areas Controlled	Capital	Fate
Tajaddin Shai Kouri Khalil	1250–1275	Shiraz, Fars, Luristan, Khuzestan, Khorawa (Khorramabad)	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Jamaleddin Khodr	1275–1290	Shiraz, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Hosameddin Omar	1290–1315	Shiraz, Luristan, Khuzestan	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Samsamaddin Mahmood	1315–1330	Shiraz, Khuzestan, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Izzeddin Ahmed	1330–1350	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Hossein	1350–1370	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Luristan	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Dowlath Khatun	1370–1390	Shiraz, Khuzestan, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Izzeddin Shujaeddin Mohammad	1390–1410	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Izzeddin Sehham	1410–1425	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Sidi Ahmad	1425–1430	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Ata (Pasha) Begi Luri	1430–1440	Shiraz, parts of Khuzestan	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Shujaddin Khorshadi	1440–1460	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Luristan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Badreddin Masoud	1460–1480	Shiraz, parts of Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Key Areas Controlled	Capital	Fate
Tajaddin Shai Kouri Khalil	1480–1500	Shiraz, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Jamaleddin Khodr	1500–1520	Shiraz, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Hosameddin Omar	1520–1540	Shiraz, Luristan, parts of Khuzestan	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Samsamaddin Mahmood	1540–1560	Shiraz, Khuzestan, parts of western Iran	Shiraz	Died or overthrown
Izzeddin Ahmed	1560–1598	Shiraz, Khuzestan, Fars	Shiraz	Died or overthrown

- Khurshadi Dynasty ruled from 1184 to 1598, with Shiraz as their main capital.
- Their influence extended across regions like Khuzestan, Luristan, and Fars.
- They faced pressures from external powers like the Seljuks, Mongols, and Safavids during their reign.
- Shiraz remained central to their political and cultural influence.

Appendix 4

1	History of Assyrian https://www.britannica.com/topic/Assyrian?utm_source=chatgpt.com
2	History of Syriac language https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_language?utm_source=chatgpt.com
3	History of Assyrian people https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_people?utm_source=chatgpt.com
4	Transcript: The oldest cuisine in the world https://www.ft.com/content/dc28dd5e–1b7a-4113-a11a-32f55032d35e?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The Assyrians and the Syriacs (Suryanis) share a common ancient heritage, but they have distinctions in history, identity, and language.

1. Origins & Differences

- Assyrians: Descendants of the ancient Assyrian Empire (circa 2500 BC–612 BC), which was centered in Mesopotamia (modern–day Iraq, Syria, and parts of Turkey & Iran).
- Suryanis (Syriacs): This term often refers to Aramaic–speaking Christian communities, especially those from the Syriac Orthodox Church. Some consider themselves Assyrians, while others view their identity as separate.

2. Language Classification

Both groups speak dialects of Aramaic, which belongs to the Semitic language family, like Hebrew and Arabic.

- Ancient Assyrian Language: Akkadian (an East Semitic language, closer to Hebrew)

- Modern Assyrian/Syriac Language: Neo–Aramaic (descended from Aramaic, which replaced Akkadian)

3. Assyrian Kingdom & Kings

The Assyrian Empire was one of the most powerful ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. Key periods:

1. Old Assyrian Period (circa 2025–1364 BC)
    - Kings: Shamshi–Adad I (1813–1781 BC)
    - Early city–state dominance in Assur
2. Middle Assyrian Period (1363–912 BC)
    - Kings: Tukulti–Ninurta I (1243–1207 BC)
    - Expansion into Babylon and surrounding areas
3. Neo–Assyrian Empire (911–612 BC) (Peak of Power)
    - Kings: Ashurnasirpal II, Tiglath–Pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal
    - Controlled Mesopotamia, Egypt, Levant, and Anatolia
    - Fall of Empire (612 BC): Defeated by a coalition of Babylonians, Medes, and Persians

4. What Happened to the Assyrian Rule?

- After 612 BC, the empire collapsed, and the Assyrians were ruled by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and later Romans, Arabs, and Ottomans.
- They retained their culture and language but were persecuted over time.

5. Modern Assyrian/Suryani Population & Locations

Today, Assyrians/Syriacs live mainly in:

- Iraq (Nineveh Plains, Baghdad, Hawler (Erbil))
- Syria (Hasakah, Aleppo, Damascus)
- Turkey (Mardin, Midyat, Tur Abdin)

- Iran (Wirme (Urmia), Tehran)
- Diaspora: USA, Sweden, Germany, Australia

Current Population –in 2025: Estimated 3–5 million worldwide, mostly in diaspora due to conflicts in the Middle East.

Appendix 5

1	Languages of the World https://www.ethnologue.com/
2	Catalogue of languages and families https://glottolog.org/
3	The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) https://wals.info/
4	Catalogue of languages of the world https://docs.ropensci.org/lingtypology/reference/glottolog.html
5	A Guide to the World's Languages: Volume I, Classification 1st Edition by Merritt Ruhlen (Author)– Publisher ： Stanford University Press (1 Jun. 1987)

The classification of languages into families, as listed above, is based on widely accepted linguistic research from sources such as:

1. Ethnologue: Languages of the World (published by SIL International) – One of the most comprehensive linguistic databases.
2. The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) – Published by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.
3. Glottolog – A database maintained by the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Lyle Campbell's "Historical Linguistics: An Introduction" – A well–known textbook on linguistic classification.
5. George L. Trager and Joseph Greenberg's work on language families – Greenberg, in particular, classified African and Native American languages into major families.
6. Merritt Ruhlen's "A Guide to the World's Languages" – A continuation of Joseph Greenberg's work.

Most of these classifications originate from Sir William Jones (18th century), Franz Bopp (19th century), and August Schleicher (19th century) for Indo–European languages. Other families, like Afro–Asiatic and Niger–Congo, were systematically categorized in the 20th century by scholars like Joseph Greenberg.

Here's a classification of all national languages of the world under their respective language families:

1. Indo–European Family

- Germanic Branch
    - English (USA, UK, Canada, Australia, etc.)
    - German (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)
    - Dutch (Netherlands, Belgium)
    - Swedish (Sweden)
    - Danish (Denmark)
    - Norwegian (Norway)
    - Icelandic (Iceland)
- Romance Branch
    - Spanish (Spain, Mexico, Argentina, etc.)
    - Portuguese (Portugal, Brazil, etc.)
    - French (France, Canada, Belgium, etc.)
    - Italian (Italy, San Marino, Vatican City)
    - Romanian (Romania, Moldova)
- Slavic Branch
    - Russian (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, etc.)
    - Polish (Poland)
    - Ukrainian (Ukraine)
    - Czech (Czech Republic)
    - Slovak (Slovakia)
    - Bulgarian (Bulgaria)
    - Serbian (Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro)
    - Croatian (Croatia)

    - Slovenian (Slovenia)
    - Macedonian (North Macedonia)
    - Belarusian (Belarus)

Indo–Iranian Branch

    - Hindi (India)
    - Urdu (Pakistan)
    - Bengali (Bangladesh)
    - Punjabi (Pakistan, India)
    - Persian (Iran, Afghanistan [Dari], Tajikistan [Tajik])
    - Pashto (Afghanistan, Pakistan)
    - Kurdish (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria)
    - Nepali (Nepal)
    - Sinhala (Sri Lanka)
- Celtic Branch
    - Irish (Ireland)
- Baltic Branch
    - Lithuanian (Lithuania)
    - Latvian (Latvia)

2. Uralic Family

- Finnish (Finland)
- Hungarian (Hungary)
- Estonian (Estonia)

3. Turkic Family

- Turkish (Turkey)

- Azerbaijani (Azerbaijan)
- Uzbek (Uzbekistan)
- Kazakh (Kazakhstan)
- Turkmen (Turkmenistan)
- Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstan)
- Tatar (Russia)

4. Afro–Asiatic Family

- Semitic Branch
    - Arabic (many countries in the Middle East & North Africa)
    - Hebrew (Israel)
    - Amharic (Ethiopia)
    - Tigrinya (Eritrea)
- Berber Branch
    - Tamazight (Morocco, Algeria)

5. Sino–Tibetan Family

- Sinitic Branch
    - Mandarin Chinese (China, Taiwan, Singapore)
    - Cantonese (Hong Kong, Macau)
- Tibeto–Burman Branch
    - Burmese (Myanmar)

6. Dravidian Family

- Tamil (Sri Lanka, India)

7. Japonic Family

- Japanese (Japan)

8. Koreanic Family

- Korean (South Korea, North Korea)

9. Austroasiatic Family

- Khmer (Cambodia)
- Vietnamese (Vietnam)

10. Austronesian Family

- Filipino (Philippines)
- Malay/Indonesian (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei)
- Malagasy (Madagascar)

11. Niger–Congo Family

- Swahili (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, etc.)
- Zulu (South Africa)
- Xhosa (South Africa)
- Yoruba (Nigeria)
- Igbo (Nigeria)
- Shona (Zimbabwe)

12. Nilo–Saharan Family

- Dinka (South Sudan)
- Luo (Kenya, Uganda)

13. Eskimo–Aleut Family

- Greenlandic (Greenland)

Appendix 6

1	Ethnologue https://www.ethnologue.com/subgroup/21/

- Indo–European 455
- Indo–Iranian 312
- **Iranian**

  Western 68

  - Northwestern 51

    Kurdish 4

    - Kurdish, Central ckb, a language of Iraq
    - Kurdish, Northern kmr, a language of Turkey
    - Kurdish, Southern sdh, a language of Iran
    - Laki lki, a language of Iran

    Talysh 16

    - Alviri–Vidari avd, a language of Iran
    - Eshtehardi esh, a language of Iran
    - Gozarkhani goz, a language of Iran
    - Harzani hrz, a language of Iran
    - Kabatei xkp, a language of Iran
    - Kajali xkj, a language of Iran
    - Karingani kgn, a language of Iran
    - Kho'ini xkc, a language of Iran
    - Koresh–e Rostam okh, a language of Iran
    - Maraghei vmh, a language of Iran
    - Razajerdi rat, a language of Iran
    - Rudbari rdb, a language of Iran
    - Shahrudi shm, a language of Iran

- Takestani tks, a language of Iran
- Talysh tly, a language of Azerbaijan
- Taromi, Upper tov, a language of Iran

Zaza–Gorani 6

- Bajelani bjm, a language of Iraq
- Gurani hac, a language of Iran
- Kakayi sdf, a language of Iraq
- Shabak sdb, a language of Iraq
- Zazaki, Northern kiu, a language of Turkey
- Zazaki, Southern diq, a language of Turkey

Southwestern 17

- Fars 2

Luri 4

- Bakhtiâri bqi, a language of Iran
- Kumzari zum, a language of Oman
- Luri, Northern lrc, a language of Iran
- Luri, Southern luz, a language of Iran

Persian 9

Tat 2

- Judeo–Tat jdt, a language of Russian Federation
- Tat, Muslim ttt, a language of Azerbaijan

Appendix 7

1	Kurdish and Persian: Dialects or Separate Languages? https://www.ijsshr.in/v6i4/29.php?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Analysis of Kurdish as an Independent Language from Farsi

1. Historical and Ethnic Origins

Kurdish and Farsi (Persian) have distinct historical origins, tracing back to different ancient civilizations.

- Kurdish Origins: The Kurdish people trace their ancestry to the Medes, Gutians, Hurrians, and Lullubi, all of whom inhabited the Zagros Mountains and surrounding regions long before the migration of Indo–Iranian peoples into the area.
- Farsi Origins: The Persian (Farsi) language is largely associated with the Tajik, Aryan, and Indo–Iranian groups, which migrated to the Iranian plateau around 1000 BC, significantly later than the civilizations from which Kurds descend.

This distinction in ancestry and historical settlement suggests that Kurdish is not a derivative of Farsi but rather an independent linguistic and ethnic entity with deep roots predating Persian influences.

2. Linguistic Classification and Distinctions

A. Kurdish Belongs to a Different Language Category

Most linguistic classifications group Kurdish under the Iranian branch of the Indo–European language family, but this categorization is misleading because it does not acknowledge its pre–Iranian roots. A better classification would be:

- Kurdish as a distinct language family with its own dialects, including:

- Kurmanji
- Sorani
- Ilami
- Gorani

Farsi, on the other hand, is part of the Indo–Iranian group, which includes:

- Persian (Farsi, Dari, Tajik)
- Pashto

By placing Kurdish under a different classification, it correctly reflects its deep–rooted connection to ancient Mesopotamian and Zagros civilizations rather than to the later Indo–Iranian migrations.

B. Lexical and Grammatical Differences

A comparison of Kurdish and Farsi demonstrates their linguistic separation:

Feature	**Kurdish (Kurmanji)**	**Persian (Farsi)**
Pronouns	Ez (I), Te (You)	Man (I), To (You)
Verb Structure	Inflected for tense/aspect	Use of auxiliary verbs
Sentence Structure	SVO (Subject–Verb– Object)	SOV (Subject–Verb– Object)
Vocabulary	Retains purely Kurdish which are Med Goti Lulu words	Heavy Sanskrit and Arabic influence

Example Sentences:

1. Kurdish: Ez diçim malê. (I go home.)
2. Farsi: Man be xane miravam. (I to home go.)

Kurdish language uses SVO structure but Farsi language uses SOV structure and their morphology and vocabulary are different enough to treat them as separate languages.

3. The Need for a New Linguistic Category

Current linguistic institutions incorrectly categorize Kurdish as a subset of Persian or Iranian languages. However, given its:

- Distinct historical origins
- Separate grammatical structure
- Unique vocabulary
- Pre–roots

It is necessary to recognize Medo-Zagros-Hurrian as a separate linguistic family. Kurdish should not be considered a dialect of Farsi but rather a distinct language in its own right.

4. Call for International Linguistic Recognition

- Linguistic institutions such as UNESCO, SIL International, and the International Linguistics Association must revise their classification to acknowledge Kurdish as a separate entity from Farsi.
- Educational systems should not treat Kurdish as a derivative of Persian but should recognize its independent status.
- Political and cultural policies in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey must respect Kurdish linguistic rights and promote its use in education, media, and governance.

Kurdish is not a dialect of Farsi; it is a distinct language with a unique historical, linguistic, and cultural heritage. Recognizing this distinction is essential for linguistic accuracy, cultural identity, and international recognition of the Kurdish people and their language.

Appendix 8

According to global genetic science data released in 2022, the proportion of the population based on ethnic ancestry reveals that the majority of the current inhabitants of the country known today as "Turkey" are, in fact, of Kurdish origin.

Unveiling the Truths of History

Girê Navrast (in turkish Göbekli Tepe) ("The Navel Hill" or "Central Mound") is an archaeological site from the Neolithic era located in Northern Kurdistan, near the city of Urfa (ancient Edessa). It was discovered in 1963 and, to this day, only minimal and superficial excavation efforts have been made under Turkish state control.

The site's civilization dates back to approximately 9500–8000 BC, placing it in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period — well before the agricultural revolution. This ancient site is renowned for its large circular enclosures made of massive stone pillars, some of which are carved with detailed depictions of humans and stylized reliefs of wild animals. These are among the oldest known megaliths in the world, offering profound insight into prehistoric spirituality and iconography. Girê Navrast is considered one of the most significant and monumental archaeological discoveries in human history.

Yet tragically, because the site lies in Kurdistan, its benefits are not enjoyed by the local population. Instead, the science surrounding it is manipulated, its cultural identity distorted, and its wealth exploited. While Girê Navrast could serve as a symbol of global heritage, it remains a buried treasure — culturally silenced and commercially looted under foreign domination.

This is an image of Girê Navrast, also known as the "Navel Hill" or "Central Mound." There is little doubt that the Turkish authorities have done — and will continue to do — everything in their power to obscure and distort this archaeological treasure. Their goal appears to be ensuring that the knowledge and significance of this ancient civilization remain unrecognized or deliberately misrepresented

Appendix 9

In the following map, the names of today's provinces of Kurdistan are written in Kurdish. Clearly, this represents the only map of the region that is today recognized as Kurdistan — not only by Kurds and the occupiers of Kurdistan, but also by the wider world. Indeed, provinces such as Baku (Baxo), Ardewel (Ardabil), Rebar (Rasht), Tawrez (Tabriz), Zangiyan (Zanjan), Qezwan (Qazvin), Anshan (Shiraz), Rojhelat (Markazi), Malamir (Malayir), Ecbatana (Hamedan), Luristan (Loristan), Kewegle (Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Rahmat), Bakhtiari, Shahr-e-Kurd, Rey Shar (Boshahr), Khoristan (Khuzestan), Yazd Kurd, Nineveh (Musil), Raqqa (Raqqah) and Alapo (Aleppo) are — even in our time — home to communities that still speak Kurdish. These regions are undeniably parts of Greater Kurdistan.

Comparative Table: Occupiers' Names vs. Authentic Kurdish Names

Occupier-Imposed Name	**Original Kurdish Name + Latin Transliteration**
Baku	باخۆ — Baxo
West Azerbaijan (Wirme (Urmia))	ورمێ — Urmê
East Azerbaijan (Tabriz)	تەورێز — Tewrêz
Zanjan	زەنگیان — Zengiyan
Qazvin	قەزوان — Qezwan
Gilan	ڕێبار — Rêbar
Markazi (Central Iran)	ڕۆژهەڵات — Rojhelat
Kordistan (Iran)	سنە، ئەردەڵان—Sne, Ardalan
Kirmashan	کرماشان — Kirmaşan
Khuzestan	خۆرستان — Xoristan
Fars	شاری کورد، شوانکارەی کوردی — Şarî Kurd, Şwankarey Kurdî
Khorramabad	خۆرئاوا — Xorawa
Hamedan	ئیکباتان — Eqbatan
Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari	بەختیاری — Baxtiyarî
Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Rahmat	کێوەگڵە — Kewegle
Bushehr	ڕێی شار، گەناوە — Rêy Şar, Genawe
Mosul	نەینەوا — Neynawa
Baghdad	تیسفون — Tîsfon
Basra	خەراپە — Xerapê
Halap, Aleppo	ئاڵاپۆ — Alapo
Hatay	ئانتی یۆج — Antiyoc
Osmaniye	باخچە — Baxçe

Occupier-Imposed Name	Original Kurdish Name + Latin Transliteration
Elazığ	خارپیت — Xarpêt
Adıyaman	سەمیسات — Semîsat
Ağrı	ئاگری — Agrî
Bingöl	چەولیک — Çewlîk
Bitlis	بێدلیس — Bêdlês
Dersim (Tunceli)	دەرسیم — Dersim
Diyarbakır	ئامەد — Amed
Erzincan	ئەرزەنگان — Erzingan
Erzurum	ئەرزروم — Erzerom
Gaziantep	دلۆک — Dilok
Hakkâri	جولەمەرگ — Colemêrg
Kars	قەرس — Qers
Iğdır	ریندک — Rîndik
Malatya	مەلەتی — Meletî
Mardin	مێردین — Mêrdîn
Siirt	سێرت — Sêrt
Şanlıurfa	ڕیها — Riha
Şırnak	شرنەخ — Şirnex
Van	وان — Wan
Batman	ئێلۆ — Êlû
Muş	مووش — Mûş
Ardahan	ئارتا — Arta
Bayburt	بایبورت — Bayburt
Artvin	ئەرتڤین — Artvîn

Appendix 10

Noah and the Story of His Ark

The tomb of Noah is located in the city of Cizre, which today lies within Şırnak Province in Northern Kurdistan. A small mosque, serving as a place of pilgrimage, has been built near the historical citadel of Noah.

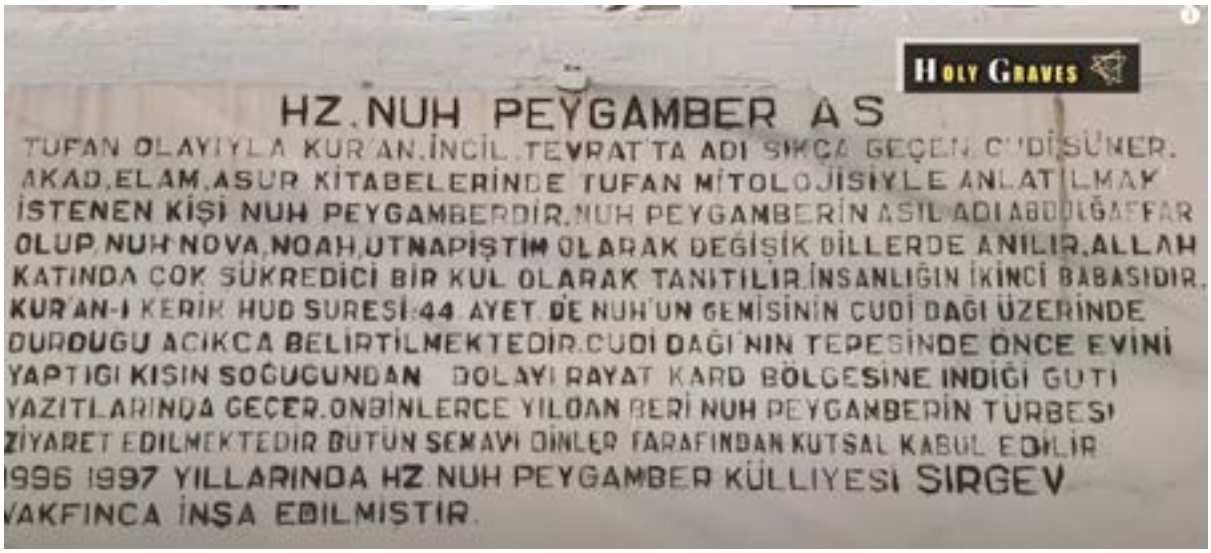
The tomb is approximately 9 meters long and 1.5 meters wide. Since ancient times, the people of Cizre and its surroundings have believed that this is the final resting place of the Prophet Noah. It is said that after the great flood, Noah settled in the city of Cizre and lived out the remainder of his life there. According to some Kurdish oral traditions and ancient narratives, Noah's ark came to rest during his lifetime in the Judi mountains near Qizre. After disembarking, Noah is believed to have established a city near Mount Judi and named it "Cizre," meaning "an island" — a reference to a place surrounded by water.

Because of this, Cizre is revered in local folklore as a sacred city, and it is sometimes referred to as "The City of the Prophet." The city lies very close to Mount Judi, which is mentioned in the religious scriptures as the site where Noah's ark came to rest. For example, the Quran in Surah Hud (11:44) states: "... and the ark came to rest on al-Judi..."

Many researchers and locals believe this to be a reference to Mount Judi rather than Mount Ararat. However, there is no archaeological evidence to definitively confirm this as the actual tomb of Noah, and archaeologists have not prioritized studying this location. Nevertheless, for centuries the site has been regarded as sacred and has been referenced by geographers and early travelers from the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths.

Today, the site continues to serve as a place of pilgrimage for local people and visiting Kurdish tourists. The extended length of the tomb is interpreted symbolically, alluding to Noah's great stature and the widespread belief that he lived for 900 years.

The Tomb of the Prophet Noah in the City of Cizre, Northern Kurdistan This tomb could have been promoted globally as one of the greatest tourist attractions anywhere in the world. However, because it is located in Kurdistan, even Noah himself — as a Kurd — is left without support or recognition.


HOLY GRAVES
HZ.NUH PEYGAMBER AS
TUFAN OLAYIYLA KUR'AN,İNCİL,TEVRAT'TA ADI SIKÇA GEÇEN C'UDİ DAĞI'NDA
AKAD,ELAM,ASUR KİTABELERİNDE TUFAN MİTOLOJİSİYLE ANLATILMAK
İSTENEN KİŞİ NUH PEYGAMBERDİR.NUH PEYGAMBERİN ASIL ADI ABDÜLGAFFAR
OLUP NUH NOVA,NOAH,UTNAPİŞTİM OLARAK DEĞİŞİK DİLLERDE ANILIR.ALLAH
KATINDA COK SÜKREDİCİ BİR KUL OLARAK TANITILIR.İNSANLIĞIN İKİNCİ BABASIDIR.
KUR'AN-I KERİK HUD SURESİ 44 AYET DE NUH'UN GEMİSİNİN CUDİ DAĞI ÜZERİNDE
DURDUGU ACIKCA BELİRTİLMEKTEDİR.CUDİ DAĞI'NIN TEPESİNDE ÖNCE EVİNİ
YAPTIGI KIŞIN SOĞUGUNDAN DOLAYI RAYAT KARD BÖLGESİNE İNDİĞİ GÜTİ
YAZITLARINDA GEÇER.ONBİNLERCE YILDAN BERİ NUH PEYGAMBERİN TÜRBESİ
ZİYARET EDİLMEKTEDİR BÜTÜN SEMAVİ DİNLER TARAFINDAN KUTSAL KABUL EDİLİR
1996 1997 YILLARINDA HZ NUH PEYGAMBER KÜLLİYESİ SİRGEV
VAKFINCA İNŞA EDİLMİŞTİR.

According to the people of the city of Cizre, the original inscription above Noah's tomb was written in ancient Kurdish, engraved on a stone slab. However, the Turkish authorities removed the Kurdish text and replaced it with a Turkish-language inscription. This is the Kurdish version that was erased:

Prophet Noah The story of the Great Flood is mentioned numerous times in the Qur'an, the Bible, and the Torah. The account of Noah's flood, as a prophet, is also recorded in

Akkadian, Elamite, and Assyrian writings. The original name of the Prophet Noah was 'Abdul-Ghaffar, and he is referred to in various languages as Noah, Nova, Noy, or Utnapishtim. God praised Prophet Noah as a deeply grateful servant. He is considered the second father of humanity.

In verse 44 of Surah Hud in the Holy Qur'an, it is explicitly stated that Noah's ark came to rest upon Mount Judi. Writings from the ancient Judi region mention that Noah first built a house on the slope of Mount Judi, and later, due to harsh weather, moved toward the Ararat and Judi lowlands.

For thousands of years, the tomb of Prophet Noah has been visited and revered by followers of all monotheistic religions.

The current Turkish-language inscription was installed by the "Sergiv Association for the Legacy of Prophet Noah" during the years 1996–1997.

The above image was taken from Mount Judi and is framed to represent the Ark of Noah in scale and proportion.

Appendix 11

Kurdish Mythology, or Kurdish Folklore and Cosmogony, is the embodiment of a collection of beliefs, legends, arts, and tales rooted in the soul and ancient history of the Kurdish nation. Broadly speaking, Kurdish mythology is a return to a time when the Kurds were actively engaged in struggles for survival, the creation of life, the discovery of the world's grandeur, reverence for nature's abundance, and the exaltation of catastrophes and historical figures.

Kurdish mythology comprises a set of beliefs and legends that have been transmitted orally from past generations to the present. These often include sacred symbols, the powerful role of nature, and the struggle between good and evil forces — such as jinn, demons, and mythical spirits.

Here, we discuss three examples of Kurdish mythological tales:

1. The Snake Queen (Şai Maran) A natural being — half woman, half serpent. The mythology of the Snake Queen symbolizes imagination, intuition, and the spiritual depth of Kurdish women. Especially in Northern Kurdistan, the tale still lives on among women and is vividly portrayed in art, illustration, and other creative works. Regardless of region, this myth is universally associated with the Kurds and Kurdistan.

The Snake Queen

2. The Dêw and the Qelmesê

Dêws (demons) are often symbolic of the destructive forces of nature. The Qelmesê — strange, mystical beings — represent greatness, immense strength, and endurance.

The dêw is a mythical creature commonly found in Kurdish folklore. It is a supernatural figure typically portrayed as a symbol of evil, fear, and oppression. Yet in some tales, the dêw appears as a kind, helpful, and heroic character — even an ally of the weak and an enemy of tyrants.

Therefore, in the myths surrounding the dêw, there is a nuanced depiction of duality: good and evil, wisdom and ignorance, oppression and liberation are contrasted and reimagined. This balance of opposing forces is a distinctive feature of Kurdish mythological storytelling.

Demon

Demon

3. Nimrod

"Nimrod" or "Namrut" is a semi-mythical king whose story appears in various ancient traditions, dating back to around 2000 BC. He is mentioned in Mesopotamian folklore, the Bible, the Qur'an, and Kurdish oral traditions — particularly in Northern Kurdistan, where he remains a well-known figure. Several places in Kurdistan bear his name:

Mount Nimrod, located in Northern Kurdistan, lies about 40 kilometers from the city of Kahta and 8 kilometers from Adıyaman. Historically, this area is associated with the Kingdom of Commagene and King Antiochus I Theos (1st century BC). The mountain is covered with hundreds of majestic stone sculptures of human figures. Dozens of these statues were looted by the Turkish authorities and sold to museums around the world — and, as usual, Turkey has shown no hesitation in pillaging the cultural heritage of Kurdistan.

In the Bible, Genesis 10:8–12 describes Nimrod as a mighty hunter and the first powerful king on Earth, descended from the lineage of the Prophet Noah.

Islamic tradition portrays him as a tyrannical king who opposed the Prophet Abraham. According to legend, Abraham traveled from the city of Urfa and destroyed the idols built by Nimrod on a mountaintop. This act is symbolically echoed in the way modern Turkey has treated history — by demolishing and dominating it.

The Qur'an — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:258) — refers to this confrontation:

"Have you not considered him who argued with Abraham about his Lord — because Allah had given him kingship? Abraham said, 'My Lord is He who gives life and causes death.' He said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.' So the disbeliever was confounded. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."

In Kurdish folklore, Nimrod is portrayed as a defiant idol-worshiping ruler who attempted to burn Abraham alive, but Abraham survived by divine miracle.

There are several notable places in Kurdistan named after Nimrod:

- Mount Nimrod, located 40 km from Qaxte (Kahta) and 8 km from Adıyaman in Northern Kurdistan.

Mount Nemrud, located 40 kilometers from the city of Kahta and 8 kilometers from Adıyaman in Northern Kurdistan.

- Lake of Nimrod's Breath (Demê Namrud), situated 13 km from Tatvan, 30 km from Bitlis, in the southern highlands of Lake Van in Northern Kurdistan.
- Ruins of Nimrod, dating back to ancient Assyria, located approximately 30 km northeast of Mosul in Southern Kurdistan.
- Nimrod's Hill, situated near the town of Hajiawa in Southern Kurdistan.

According to tradition, Nimrod ruled over the ancient cities of Babylon, Uruk (Erch), Akkad, and Calneh, within the heartlands of ancient Sumer. Religiously, he is believed to have worshiped the deities Enlil, Ishtar, Marduk, and the sun.

Lake Nemrud, known for its fresh water, spans a circumference of 12 kilometers and is located 13 kilometers from the city of Tatvan in Northern Kurdistan.

References

Kurdish References

ئەبوو حەنیفەی دینەوەری (٨٨٨) مێژووی شارستانەکان و پادشا
Ebû Henîfey Dînewerî (888) Mêjûyê Şarestanekan û Padîşah
ئەبوو حەنیفەی دینەوەری (٨٩٠) أنساب الأكراد– نەسەبی کوردان
Ebû Henîfey Dînewerî (890) Ensab al-Ekrad – Nesebî Kurdan
بابا تاهیر عوریان هەمەدانی (١٠٠٠) دووبەیتەکانی بابا تاهیر
Baba Tahîr ûryan Hemedanî (1000) Dubeytekani Baba Tahîr
ئەولیایی چەلەبی (١٦٤٠) سیاحەتنامە (اولیای چلبی سیاحتنامەسی)
Ewliya Çelebî (1640) Seyahatname (Ewliya Çelebî Seyahatnamesî)
عەلی تەرمەخی (١٦٥٠) سینتاکس و وشەکاری کوردی (سەرفی کوردی)
Elî Termexî (1650) Syntax û Weşekarîy Kurdî (Serfî Kurdî)
مەستورەی ئەردەڵان (١٨٤٠) مێژووی ئەردەڵان
Mestûrey Erdelan (1840) Mêjûyê Erdelan
مەلا مەحمود بایەزیدی (١٨٥٠) کورد و عەجەم
Mela Mehmûd Bayezidî (1850) Kurd û Ecem
مەلا مەحمود بایەزیدی (١٨٥٧) مێژووی نوێی کوردستان
Mela Mehmûd Bayezidî (1857) Mêjûy Nwey Kurdistan
شەرەفخانی بتڵیسی (١٥٩٧) شەرەفنامە، مێژووی کوردستان
Şerefxanê Bîtlîsî (1597) Şerefname, Mêjûyê Kurdistan
شێخ محەمەد مەردۆخی (١٩٢٥) مێژووی کورد و کوردستان
Şêx Mehemmed Merdoxî (1925) Mêjûy Kurd û Kurdistan
محەمەد ئەمین زەکی (١٩٣٧) خولاسەیەکی تاریخی کورد و کوردستان
Mehemmed Emîn Zekî (1937) Xulasayekî Tarîxîy Kurd û Kurdistan
شەرەفخانی بتڵیسی (١٥٩٧) شەرەفنامە، مێژووی ماڵەمیرانی کوردستان. وەرگێران لە فارسیەوە بۆ کوردی، هەژار موکریانی (١٩٧٢)
Şerefxanê Bîtlîsî (1597) Şerefname, Mêjûyê Malemîranî Kurdistan. Wergêran le farsîyew bo Kurdî, Hejar Mokrîyanî (1972)
نەوشیروان مستەفا ئەمین (٢٠٠٥) کورد و عەجەم، مێژووی سیاسی کوردەکانی ئێران
Newşîrwan Mistefa Emîn (2005) Kurd û Ecem, Mêjûyê Siyasîy Kurdakanî Êran

دوکتۆر جەمال ڕشید، دوکتۆر فەوزی ڕشید (٢٠١١) مێژووی کۆنی کورد. وەرگێران لە عەرەبیەوە، ملکۆ کەلاری
Dr. Cemal Reşîd, Dr. Fewezî Reşîd (2011) Mêjûyê Konîy Kurd. Wergîran le Erebiyew, Melko Kelarî
سۆران حەمەڕەش (٢٠١٣) کورد کێیە؟
Soran Heme Reş (2013) Kurd kêye?

Persian References

ابن‌خلدون (۱۳۸۵) تاریخ ایران باستان
فرانسوا دوک (۱۳۹۵) تاریخ پارتیان (پارتیان)
پیتر براون (۱۳۷۰) تاریخ ساسانیان
جواد مشکور (۱۳٤۸) تاریخ سامانیان
حسن امین (۱۳٦٤) تاریخ عباسیان
جان پرکینز (۱۳۸۳) تاریخ مغولان و تاثیر آنها بر ایران
سیدمحمود محدث (۱۳۷۵) تاریخ ایران در دوره صفویان
کریم کشاورز (۱۳۸۷) تاریخ ایران در دوران قاجاریه
عزیزالله علیخانی (۱۳٦۳) نقش ایران در تاریخ دنیای اسلام
باباجان غفوروف (۱۳۹۸) تاجیکان (تاریخ قدیم و قرون وسطی)
روشن رحمانی و فرانک دوانلو (۱۳۸۰) تاریخ گردآوری، نشر و پژوهش افسانه‌های مردم فارسی‌زبان (تاجیکستان، افغانستان، ایران)
اسماعیل حقی اوزوون چارشلی (۱۳۸۰–۱۳۸۸) تاریخ عثمانی (۴ جلدی)
علی‌اصغر شعر دوست (نامشخص) تاریخ ادبیات نوین تاجیکستان

رحیم مسلف (نامشخص) تاریخ تاجیکان

نماز حاتم (نامشخص) تاریخ تاجیکان ورارود (از دهه ۱۸۶۰ تا ۱۹۲۴)

دکتر صاحب‌نظر مرادی (چاپ دوم، تابستان ۱۴۰۳) تاریخ تاجیکان خراسان؛ تاریخ، فرهنگ و سرنوشت (دوره سه‌جلدی)

دکتر غلامعلی ادریسیان (۲۰۱۶) کورد کوردستان در هزاره‌های ماقبل تاریخ و عهد باستان

Arabic References

ابن أبي شيبة (٧٣٣) مسند ابن أبي شيبة

محمد بن الحسن الشيباني (٨٠٠) الفقه الشافعي (في شرح السيرة النبوية)

أبو جعفر محمد بن جرير الطبري(٩١٥) تاريخ الأمم والملوك (الطبري)

کوردیّکی تاتی شاری ئامول بووه و له بەغدا ئەم پەرتووکەی نووسیووه.

علي بن محمد بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن الأثير الجزري(١٢٣١) الكامل في التاريخ

کوردیّکی شاری جزیری باکووری کوردستان بووه و له مووسڵ ئەم پەرتووکەی نووسیووه.

صلاح الدين الصفدي (١٣٤٩) الوافي بالوفيات

ابن خلدون (١٤٠٧) مقدمة ابن خلدون

جلال الدين السيوطي (١٥١٦) الدر المنثور في التفسير بالمأثور

د. عبد الرحمن بدوي (١٩٧٢) الفكر الفارسي في العصر الإسلامي

أحمد باشا اليازجي (١٨٨٢) تاريخ تركيا

إدوارد ج. براون (١٩٢٤) تاريخ الأدب الفارسي

محمد عبد الله دراز (١٩٤٩) الإسلام والتاريخ في العراق

عمر رضا كحالة (١٩٥٣) تاريخ إيران في العصر الإسلامي

فوزي النشار (١٩٦٧) أثر الفتوحات الإسلامية على الحضارات القديمة (مصر، العراق، إيران)

قاسم محمد عباس (١٩٧٣) تاريخ الأكراد في الشرق الأوسط

إحسان عباس (١٩٧٥) تاريخ الأدب الكردي
محمد سعيد رمضان البوطي (١٩٧٨) الإسلام في بلاد فارس (إيران)
محمود شاكر (١٩٧٨) الحضارة الإسلامية في إيران والعراق
علي عبد الله صالح (١٩٨٠) تاريخ الأكراد في التاريخ الإسلامي
كمال مظهر العكيدي (١٩٨٢) مؤرخو العراق القديم
عبد القادر زاهر (١٩٨٣) العراق وسوريا في العصور الإسلامية المبكرة
جان باتيست ڤيرمو (١٩٨٥) الآشوريون: دراسة في التاريخ والحضارة
إبراهيم الأنصاري (١٩٨٧) الآشوريون في بلاد الرافدين: دراسة تاريخية
صلاح الدين الجابري (١٩٩٠) الإسلام في العراق: من الفتح الإسلامي إلى الدولة العباسية
أندريه لاكوست (١٩٩١) تاريخ تركيا الحديثة: من السلطنة العثمانية إلى الجمهورية التركية
سامي محمد مصلح (١٩٩٢) تاريخ إيران في العصر الساساني
إحسان عباس (١٩٩٤) تاريخ الأدب الكردي
جورج أكرم فارس (١٩٩٤) تاريخ الأكراد في القرون الوسطى
د. نجيب مكسيموس (١٩٩٥) تاريخ العراق القديم: من السومريين إلى الآشوريين
جورج إسحاق (١٩٩٦) تاريخ سوريا الحديث: من الاستعمار الفرنسي إلى الاستقلال
عادل زكريا (١٩٩٨) تاريخ الساسانيين وتحولاتهم السياسية
ياسين إبراهيم العلي (٢٠٠٥) دور إيران في تكوين الفكر الإسلامي

English References

📚 Books

1. Herodotus. (440 B.C.). *The Histories*.

   ➤ One of the earliest historical accounts describing the peoples, cultures, and political events of the ancient Near East, including references to the Medes and surrounding regions.

2. Xenophon. (399 B.C.). *Anabasis*.

   ➤ A firsthand account of the march of the Ten Thousand through regions inhabited by ancient Kurdish tribes and peoples.

3. Xenophon. (c. 370 B.C.). *Cyropaedia* (*The Education of Cyrus*).

   ➤ A historical and philosophical work describing the life, leadership, and empire-building of Cyrus the Great and the early Persian Empire.

4. Strabo. (20 B.C.–20 A.D.). *Geographica*.

   ➤ A major geographical and historical work documenting the peoples, regions, and cultures of the ancient world, including Kurdistan and surrounding territories.

5. Pliny the Elder. (77 A.D.). *Natural History*.

   ➤ An encyclopedic Roman work containing geographical, ethnographic, and historical information about ancient peoples and regions.

6. Ptolemy. (150 A.D.). *The Geography*.

   ➤ A foundational geographical text mapping ancient regions and settlements across the Near East and surrounding areas.

7. Movses Khorenatsi. (5th Century A.D.). *History of Armenia*.

   ➤ An important Armenian historical chronicle containing references to neighboring peoples and regional political developments.

8. Al-Masudi. (10th Century A.D.). *The Meadows of Gold*.

   ➤ An influential Islamic-era historical and geographical work mentioning Kurdish populations and regional dynamics.

9. Sharaf Khan Bidlisi. (1597 A.D.). *Sharafnameh*.

   ➤ One of the most important classical Kurdish historical works documenting Kurdish dynasties, emirates, and political history.

10. Kessler, K. (1889). *Mani: A Study on the Founder of Manichaeism*. Berlin: Reimer.

    ➤ A seminal academic work on the religious figure Mani and his impact.

11. King, L. W. (1915). *A History of Babylon, from the Foundation of the Monarchy to the Persian Conquest*. London: Chatto & Windus.

    ➤ An early yet foundational account of Babylonian civilization.

12. Mostofi, A. (1945). *Administrative and Social History of the Qajar Period*. Tehran: Soroush Press.

➤ Chronicles the bureaucratic and social developments during the Qajar dynasty in Iran.

13. Culican, W. (1965). *The Medes and Persians (Ancient Peoples and Places)*. London: Thames & Hudson.

    ➤ Traces the origins and contributions of the Medes and early Persians.

14. Piotrovsky, B. (1969). *The Ancient Civilization of Urartu*. London: Barrie & Rockliff.

    ➤ An archaeological and historical overview of the Urartian civilization in eastern Anatolia.

15. Entessar, N. (1992). *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

    ➤ A political science perspective on Kurdish identity and nationalism.

16. Hassanpour, A. (1992). *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918–1985*. San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press.

    ➤ A study of how language has been used in Kurdish national identity and politics.

17. Izady, M. R. (1992). *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook*. Washington D.C.: Taylor & Francis.

    ➤ Covers history, language, religion, and culture of the Kurds with maps and charts.

18. van Bruinessen, M. (1992). *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed Books.

    ➤ An anthropological and sociopolitical exploration of Kurdish tribal society.

19. Laçiner, S., & Bal, İ. (2004). *The Ideological and Historical Roots of Kurdist Movements in Turkey: Ethnicity, Demography, Politics*. Ankara: USAK.

    ➤ Explores the historical and ideological context of Kurdish movements in Turkey.

20. McDowall, D. (2004). *A Modern History of the Kurds* (3rd ed.). London: I.B. Tauris.

    ➤ One of the most comprehensive books on Kurdish history from the 19th to early 21st century.

21. Yildiz, K. (2004). *The Kurds in Iraq: The Past, Present and Future*. London: Pluto Press.

    ➤ Offers a detailed account of Kurdish autonomy and Kurdish-Iraqi relations.

22. Natali, D. (2005). *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

➤ Focuses on Kurdish identity and the relationship with surrounding states.

23. Romano, D. (2006). *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

➤ An academic analysis of the Kurdish national movement using political theory.

24. Sarkhosh Curtis, V. (2007). *The Age of the Parthians (The Idea of Iran)*. London: I.B. Tauris.

➤ Covers the culture, administration, and military of the Parthian Empire within broader Iranian history.

25. Aigle, D. (2011). *Iran under the Mongols: Ilkhanid Administrators and Persian Notables in Fars*. Leiden: Brill.

➤ A detailed examination of Mongol rule in Iran and its Persian bureaucratic structure.

26. Álvarez–Mon, J., & Garrison, M. B. (2011). *Elam and Persia*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

➤ Scholarly contributions on the continuity and connections between the Elamite and Persian civilizations.

27. Gunter, M. M. (2011). *The Kurds: A Modern History*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.

➤ Focuses on recent Kurdish political movements and the geopolitics of the region.

28. Daryaee, T. (2013). *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire (International Library of Iranian Studies)*. London: I.B. Tauris.

➤ A comprehensive study of Sasanian political, cultural, and social structures.

29. Bengio, O. (2014). *The Kurds of Iraq: Building a State within a State*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

➤ Examines the evolution of Kurdish autonomy in post–Saddam Iraq.

30. Waters, M. (2014). *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BCE*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

➤ A thorough yet accessible history of the Achaemenid Empire and its impact.

31. Bryce, T. (2018). *Warriors of Anatolia: A Concise History of the Hittites*. London: I.B. Tauris.

➤ A readable overview of the Hittite civilization and its influence on the ancient Near East.

32. Hourly History. (2022). *Mitanni Empire: A History from Beginning to End (Ancient Civilizations)*.

➤ A brief introduction to the rise and fall of the Mitanni kingdom.

33. Frahm, E. (2023). *Assyria: The Rise and Fall of the World's First Empire*. New York: Basic Books.

➤ A recent and accessible history of ancient Assyria's power and influence.

34. Evliyā Çelebi. (1670). *Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the Seventeenth Century* (J. von Hammer, Trans., 1834).

➤ A historical travel narrative offering early accounts of regions including Kurdistan.

35. Evliyā Çelebi. (1670/2023). *Book of Travels* (K. Kreiser, Trans.).

➤ Modern English translation of Çelebi's accounts of 17th-century Middle East and Kurdish regions.

Web Resources

1. Council on Foreign Relations. (n.d.). *Timeline: The Kurds' Long Struggle With Statelessness*.
Retrieved from https://www.cfr.org/timeline/kurds-long-struggle-statelessness

➤ Outlines key historical events in Kurdish statelessness.

2. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Elam*.
Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/place/Elam

➤ Information on ancient Elamite civilization relevant to early Kurdish history.

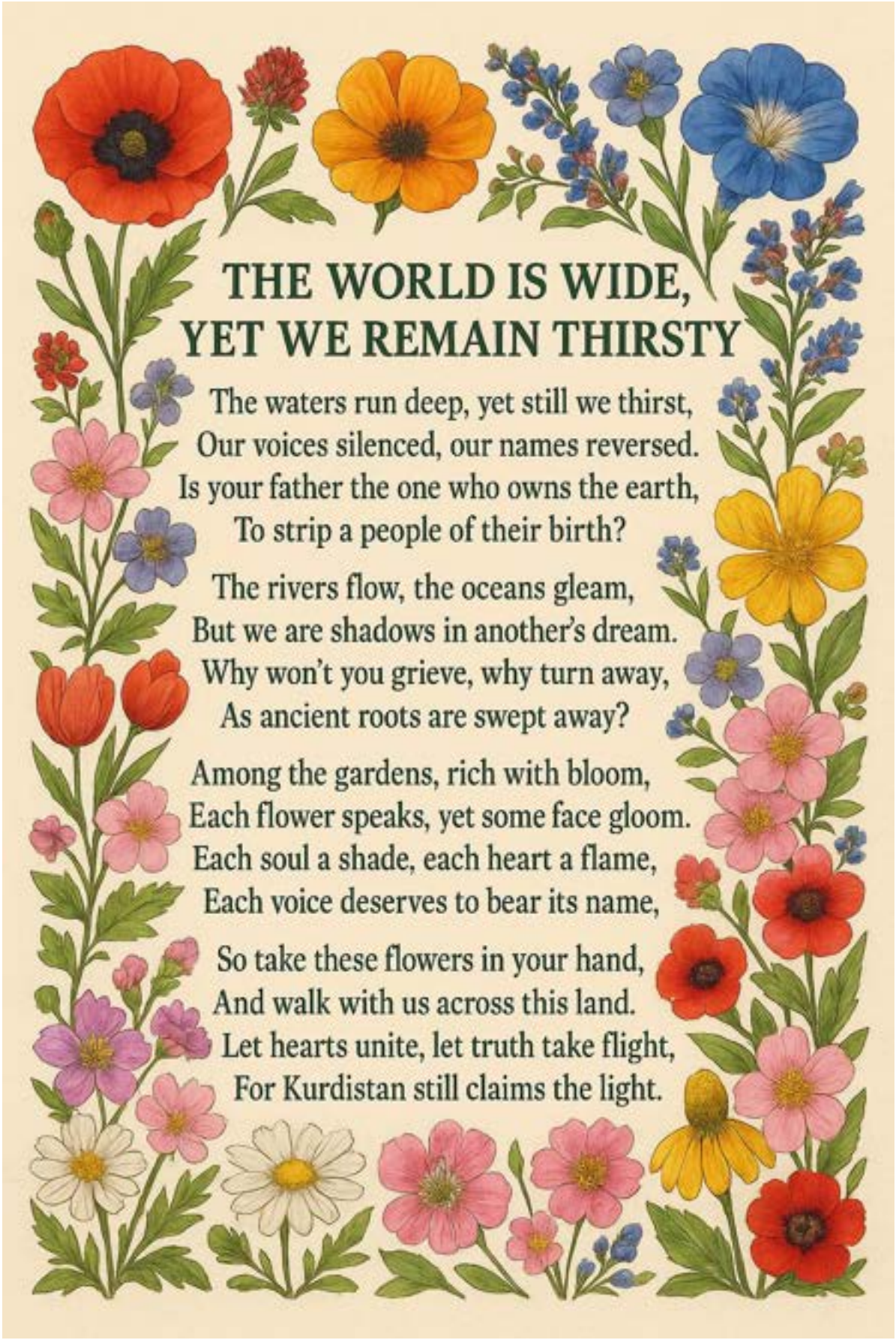
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). *History of Mesopotamia*.
Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/place/Mesopotamia-historical-region-

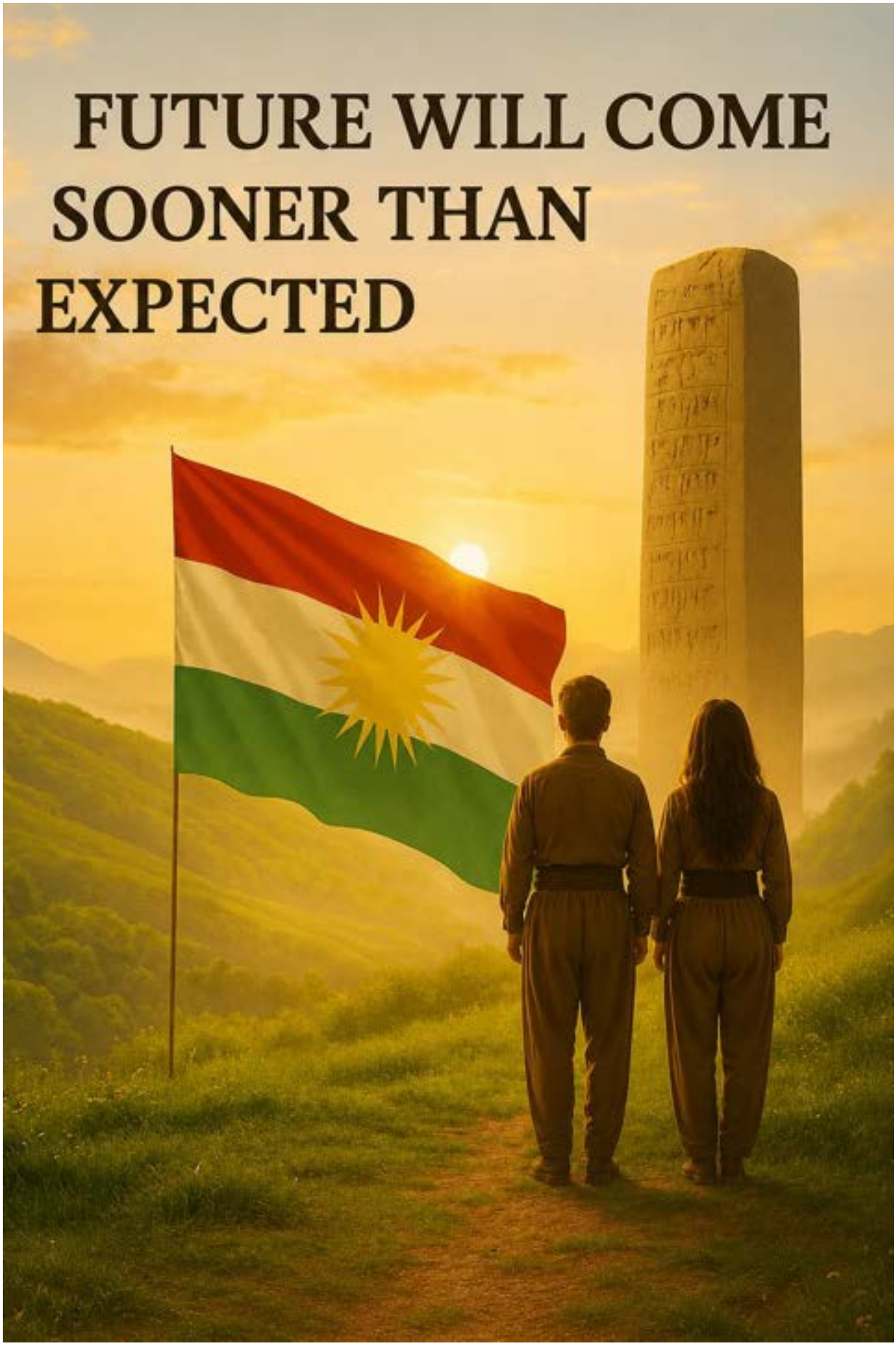
Asia

➤ Comprehensive history of Mesopotamia, a region central to Kurdish origins.

4. Getty Museum. (n.d.). *Mesopotamia: Civilization Begins*.
   Retrieved from https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/mesopotamia/explore.html
   ➤ Exploration of Mesopotamian artifacts and culture.
5. Harvard Museums of the Ancient Near East. (n.d.). *Teacher Resources for Mesopotamian Monuments*.
   Retrieved from https://hmane.harvard.edu/teacher-resources-mesopotamian-monuments
   ➤ Educational tools focused on Mesopotamian civilization.
6. Khan Academy. (n.d.). *Ancient Mesopotamian Civilizations*.
   Retrieved from https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/world-history-beginnings/ancient-mesopotamia/a/mesopotamia-article
   ➤ Introductory resource on Mesopotamian history.
7. Kurdistan Memory Programme. (n.d.). *History of the Kurds*.
   Retrieved from https://kurdistanmemoryprogramme.com/history-of-the-kurds/
   ➤ Multimedia documentation of Kurdish history and heritage.
8. National Geographic Education. (n.d.). *Mesopotamia*.
   Retrieved from https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/resource-library-mesopotamia/
   ➤ Overview of Mesopotamian civilization and geography.
9. Short History. (n.d.). *The Term Persia and Medes Empire*.
   Retrieved from https://www.shorthistory.org/ancient-civilizations/mesopotamia/persian-empire/the-term-persia-and-medes-empire/
   ➤ Details the historical context of Medes and Persia, connected to Kurdish ancestry.
10. TeachersFirst. (n.d.). *Ancient Mesopotamian Civilizations Resources*.
    Retrieved from https://www.teachersfirst.com/spectopics/mesopotamian.cfm
    ➤ Educational content for teaching Mesopotamian civilizations.

11. The Kurdish Project. (n.d.). *Learn About Kurdish History*.
Retrieved from https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-history/
➤ User-friendly overview of Kurdish historical developments.
12. University of Cambridge, Department of Archaeology. (n.d.). *Online Resources for Mesopotamia*.
Retrieved from https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/about-us/mesopotamia/online-resources-for-mesopotamia
➤ Academic resources on Mesopotamian archaeology.
13. World History Encyclopedia. (n.d.). *Map of the Akkadian Empire*.
Retrieved from https://www.worldhistory.org/image/160/map-of-the-akkadian-empire/
➤ Visual representation of the Akkadian Empire's expanse.


THE WORLD IS WIDE,
YET WE REMAIN THIRSTY
The waters run deep, yet still we thirst,
Our voices silenced, our names reversed.
Is your father the one who owns the earth,
To strip a people of their birth?
The rivers flow, the oceans gleam,
But we are shadows in another's dream.
Why won't you grieve, why turn away,
As ancient roots are swept away?
Among the gardens, rich with bloom,
Each flower speaks, yet some face gloom.
Each soul a shade, each heart a flame,
Each voice deserves to bear its name,
So take these flowers in your hand,
And walk with us across this land.
Let hearts unite, let truth take flight,
For Kurdistan still claims the light.


FUTURE WILL COME
SOONER THAN
EXPECTED